Katrine

Elinor Macartney Lane

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[See page 24

"I HAVE WAITED ALL THESE YEARS"

KATRINE

A NOVEL

BY

ELINOR MACARTNEY LANE

AUTHOR OF

NANCY STAIR and MILLS OF GOD

GROSSET & DUNLAP

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From
H. G. Jaquery

To Grant B. Schley

Dear and great Friend! In Katrine's *fancied* "Land"
You long have held your own much-honored place—
Have met great Esmond; held kind Newcome's hand;
And talked with merry Alan face to face;
For there, where Loyalty was word of countersign,
You entered, all unchallenged, for the land was thine!

E. M. L.

Paris, 1909

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PREFACE

IT is difficult to tell the story of Irish folk intimately and convincingly, the bare truths concerning their splendid recklessness, their unproductive ardor, their loyalty and creative memories, sounding to another race like a pack of lies.

When, therefore, I recall "The Singing Woman," Katrine; her beauty, her fearlessness, her loyalty, her voice of gold—it seems as if only one lost to caution and heedless of consequence would undertake her history expecting it to be believed. But there is this advantage: the newspapers, recording much of her early life, are still extant, her Paris work discussed by Josef's pupils to this day, and her divine forgetfulness the night she was to sing at the Metropolitan a known thing to people of two continents; but unrecorded of her, till now, is that, for love, like brave, mad Antony, she threw a world away.

It is impossible to tell the tale of Katrine

without narrating side by side the story of Dermott McDermott; and here trouble begins, for Ireland would never allow anything written concerning him that was not flattering, and the Irish people, especially in the regions of Kildare and Athlone, have combined to make a saint of him. A saint of Dermott McDermott! Heaven save the mark!

But of Frank Ravenel's life I can speak with truth and authority. I had the story from his own lips under the pines and the stars of North Carolina, fishing the Way-Home River, or sitting together on the Chestnut Ridge, where Katrine and he first met. This was before he became—before Katrine made him—the great man he is to-day.

And two things linger with me — the first a conversation between Dermott and Katrine at the Countess de Nemours'.

"Tell me," said Katrine: "do you think any woman ever married the man who was kindest to her?"

"It's unrecorded if it ever occurred," Dermott answered.

And a second, the truth of which is less open to dispute.

"Nora," Katrine asked, "could you ever have loved any but Dennis—your first love?"

"No," answered Nora. "To an Irishwoman the drame comes but the wance."

E. M. L.

KATRINE

KATRINE

I

UNDER THE SOUTHERN PINES

RAVENEL PLANTATION occupies a singular rise of wooded land in North Carolina, between Way-Home River, Loon Mountain, and the Silver Fork. The road which leads from Charlotte toward the south branches by the Haunted Hollow, the right fork going to Carlisle and the left following the rushing waters of the Way-Home River to the very gate-posts of Ravenel Plantation, through which the noisy water runs.

Ravenel Mansion, which stands a good three miles from the north gate of the plantation, is approached by a driveway of stately pines. The main part is built of gray stone, like a fort, with mullioned windows, the yellow glass of early colonial times still in the upper panes. But the show-places of the plantation are the south

wing (added by Francis Ravenel the fourth), and the great south gateway, bearing the carved inscription: "Guests are Welcome."

Long ago, when Charles II. was on his way to be crowned, a certain English Ravenel—Foulke by name—had the good-luck to fall in with that impulsive monarch, and for no further service than the making of a rhyme, vile in meter and villainous as to truth-telling, to receive from him an earldom and a grant of "certain lands beyond the seas."

Here, in these North Carolina lands, for nearly two hundred years, Ravenel child had grown to Ravenel man, educated abroad, taught to believe little in American ways, and marrying frequently with a far-off cousin in England or in France.

They were gay lads these Ravenels, hard riders, hard drinkers, reckless in living and love-making, and held to have their way where women were concerned. Indeed, this tradition had ancient authority, for on the stone mount of the sundial in the lilac-walk there had been chiselled, in the year 1771, by some disgruntled rival perhaps:

"The Ravenels ryde forth,
Hyde alle ye ladyes gay;
They take a heart,
They break a heart,
Then ryde away!"

The present owner of the plantation, Francis Ravenel, seventh of the name, stood in the great doorway, dinner dressed, the night after his return from the East, viewing this inscription with a humorous drawing together of the brows.

He was handsome, as the Ravenel men had always been, with a bearing which caused men and women, especially women, to follow him with their eyes. Certain family characteristics were markedly his: the brown hair and the wide gray eyes, which seemed to brood over a woman as though she were the only one to be desired—these had belonged to the Ravenel men for generations; but the shape of the head, with its broad brow, the short upper lip and appealing smile, he had from his lady mother, who had been a D'Hauteville, of New Orleans.

From the time of his majority, some five years before, the South had been rife with tales of his wit, his love-making, and his lawlessness. Whatever the cause, women were forever falling in love with him, and the mention of his name from Newport News to New Orleans would but call forth the history of another love-affair, in which, according to the old inscription, he had taken a heart, had broken a heart, and then had ridden away.

He awaited coffee and cigarettes in the great hall where the candles had been lighted for the evening, although the sun was still above Loon Mountain. Looking within he saw their gleams on vanished roses in the old brocade; on dingy armor of those who had fought with Charlie Stuart; on stately mahogany, old pewters, and on portraits of the fighting Ravenels of days long gone. There was Malcom, who died music-mad; Des Grieux, the one with ruff and falcon, said to be a Romney; and that Francis, fourth of the name (whom the present Francis most resembled), who had lost his life, the story ran, for a queen too fair and fond.

Mrs. Ravenel, adoring and tender, in lavender and old lace, the merriest, gayest, most illogical little mother in all that mother-land of the South, regarded Frank as he re-entered with a blush of pleasure on her bright, fond face.

"Who has the Mainwaring place, mother?" he asked.

"A heavenly person," Mrs. Ravenel answered.

"Man, I suppose," Francis laughed.

Mrs. Ravenel nodded assent and repeated: "Heavenly! An Irishman; with black hair, very black brows, pale like a Spaniard, about thirty—"

"Your own age," Frank interrupted, with a complimentary gesture.

—"who rides like a trooper, drinks half a glass of whiskey at a gulp, and is the greatest liar I can imagine."

"It's enlightening to discover an adored parent's idea of a heavenly person," Francis said, with an amused smile.

"He sends me flowers and writes me poetry. We exchange," she explained, and there came to her eyes a delightfully critical appreciation of her own doings.

"The heavenly person has—I suppose—a name?" Frank suggested.

"Dermott McDermott."

"Has the heavenly person also a profession?"

"He is"—Mrs. Ravenel hesitated a minute—"he is an international lawyer and a Wall Street man."

"It sounds imposing," Frank returned. "What does it mean?"

"I don't know," his mother answered. "*I* have enough of the artist in me to be satisfied with the mere sound. His English—"

"His Irish," Frank interrupted.

—"is that of Dublin University, the most beautiful speech in the world. He is here in the in-

terest of the Mainwaring people, he says, who want some information concerning those disputed mines. Added to his other attractions, he can talk in rhyme. Do you understand? *Can talk in rhyme*," she repeated, with emphasis, "and carries a Tom Moore in his waistcoat-pocket."

There came a sound of singing outside—a man's voice, musical, with an indescribably jaunty clip to the words:

> "I was never addicted to work,
> 'Twas never the way o' the Gradys;
> But I'd make a most excellent Turk,
> For I'm fond of tobacco and ladies."

And with the song still in the air, the singer came through the shadow of the porch and stood in the doorway—a man tall and well set-up, in black riding-clothes, cap in hand, who saluted the two with his crop, and as he did so a jewel gleamed in the handle, showing him to be something of a dandy.

Standing in the doorway, the lights from the candelabra on his face and the sunset at his back, one noticed on the instant his great freedom of movement as of one good with the foils. His hair was dark, and his eyes, deep-set and luminous as a child's, looked straight at the world through

lashes so long they made a mistiness of shadow. He had the pallor of the Spanish Creole found frequently in the south of Ireland folk. His mouth was straight, the upper lip a bit fuller than the under one, as is the case when intellect predominates, and his hair was of a singularly dull and wavy black. But set these and many more things down, and the charm of him has not been written at all, for the words give no hint of his bearing, his impertinent and charming familiarity, the surety of touch, the right word, and the ready concession.

"I thought the evening was beautiful till I saw you, madam," he said, with a sweeping salute. "I kiss your hand—with emotion." There was a slight pause here as he regarded Mrs. Ravenel with open admiration. "And thank you for the beautiful verses, asking that at some soon date you send more of the flowers of your imagination to bind around the gloomy brow of Dermott McDermott."

It was the McDermott way, this. A kiss on the hand and a compliment to Madam Ravenel; a compliment and a kiss on the lips to Peggy of the Poplars; but in his heart it was to the deil with all women—save one—for he regarded them as emotional liars to be sported with and forgotten.

As Mrs. Ravenel presented to each other these two men whose lives were to be interwoven for so many years, they shook hands cordially enough, but there was both criticism and appraisement in the first glance each took of the other.

The contrast between them, as they stood with clasped hands, did not pass unnoted by Mrs. Ravenel. The black hair, olive skin, the bluer than blue eyes of Dermott, as he stood in the light of the doorway; his alert, theatric, dominating personality; his superb self-consciousness; the decision of manner which comes only to those who have achieved, seemed to her prejudiced gaze admirable in themselves, but more admirable as a foil to the warm brown of Frank's hair, to the poetic gray of his eyes, his apparent self-depreciation, his easy acceptances, and his elegant reluctance to obtrude on others either his views or his personality.

Perhaps it was the prescience of coming trouble between them which caused a noticeable pause after the introduction—a pause which Dermott courteously broke.

"So this is the son," he said. "Sure," he went on, comparing them, "ye've a right to be proud of each other! Ye make a fine couple, the two of you. And now"—putting his cap,

gloves, and riding-whip on the window-ledge—"I'll have coffee if you'll offer it. Let me"—taking some sugar—"eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow," he laughed—"why, to-morrow I may have talked myself to death!"

Frank rose from his chair and stood by the chimney, regarding the Irishman as one might have viewed a performer in a play, realizing to the full what his mother had meant by the "charm of McDermott," for it was a thing none could deny, for the subtle Celt complimented the ones to whom he spoke by an approving and admiring attention, and conveyed the impression that the roads of his life had but led him to their feet.

"To tell the truth," McDermott continued, noting and by no means displeased by Frank's scrutiny, "I had heard ye were home, Mr. Ravenel, and came early to see you with a purpose—two purposes, I might say. First, I wanted to talk to you concerning Patrick Dulany, the overseer whom I got for your mother last year. Ye've not see him yet?"

"I arrived only last night, Mr. McDermott," Francis answered.

"True, I'd forgotten. It's a strange life Patrick's had, and a sad one. He's of my own

college in Dublin, but a good dozen years older than I. 'Twas in India I knew him first. He's one of the Black Dulanys of the North, and we fought side by side at Ramazan. What a time! What a time! In the famous charge up the river, when we turned, I lost my horse, and in that backward plunge my life was not worth taking. While I was lying there half dead and helpless, this Dulany got from his old gray, flung me across his saddle, and carried me nine miles back to the camp. Judge if I love him!"

Mr. McDermott looked from the window with the fixed gaze of one struggling with unshed tears.

"The next month he was ordered home, and soon after fell the bitter business of the marriage in Italy. I stood up with him. She was the most beautiful creature I have ever seen—save one; and a voice—God! I heard her sing in Milan once. The king was there; the opera 'La Favorita.' She was sent for to the royal box. We had the horses out of her carriage and dragged it home ourselves. What a night it was! What a night it was!"

McDermott paused as in an ecstasy of remembrance.

"What was her name?" Francis asked.

"Ah, that"—he threw out his hand with a

dramatic gesture—"'tis a thing I swore never to mention. 'Tis a fancy of Dulany's to let it die in silence."

"And she left him?" Mrs. Ravenel's voice was full of sympathy as she spoke.

"For another!" Dermott made a dramatic pause, relishing his climaxes. "And then she died."

"So, for his daughter's sake"—there was a curious hesitancy in his speech just here, but he carried it off jauntily—"his daughter, a primrose girl and the love of my life, I've come to ask that you be a bit lenient with him, Mr. Ravenel, at the times he has taken a drop too much, as your lady mother has been in the year past. I think you'll find him able to manage, for, in spite of his infirmity, black and white fall under his spell alike."

"If Frank has a fault, Mr. McDermott, which I do not think he has, it's over-generosity. You need have no fear for your friend," Mrs. Ravenel said, proudly, putting her hand on Frank's shoulder.

As her son turned to kiss the slender fingers, Dermott McDermott regarded the two curiously.

"You're fortunate in having a son of twenty—" He hesitated.

"Of twenty-five," Francis finished for him.

"—so devoted to you, madam. Ye're twenty-five—coming or going?" he inquired, with a laugh.

"On my last birthday—April."

An odd light shone in McDermott's eyes for a second before he said, with a bow:

"Neither of ye look it; I can assure you of that. Well," he continued, reaching for his cap and whip, "I must be going. Ye've found already, haven't ye, Ravenel, that the sound of my own voice is the music of heaven to my ears?" And then, as though trying to recollect: "I think I said it was at Ramazan Dulany and I fought together?"

Francis nodded.

"God," McDermott cried, his face illumined, his eyes glowing, "I wish it had been Waterloo! I've always carried a bruised spirit that I didn't fight at Waterloo."

"Your loss is our gain, Mr. McDermott," Francis answered, with a smile. "You'd scarce be here to tell it if you had."

"And that's maybe true," Dermott said, pausing by the doorway to put on his gloves. "But I'd rather have fought at Waterloo, even if I were dead now, so that I could tell you exactly

how it felt— There"—he broke his speech with a laugh—"I caught myself on the way to an Irish bull.

"Oh! Mr. Ravenel," he called back suddenly, as though the thought had just come to him, "I've been waiting your coming to have a talk with you—a business talk—but not to-night." He waved the matter aside with a gay, outward movement of the hands. "Sometime at your pleasure." Again the eyes of the two met, and this time each measured the other more openly than before.

"I shall be glad to see you at any time, Mr. McDermott," Frank answered, his words courteous enough, but his eyes lacking warmth; and the intuitive Celt realized that in Frank he had met one whom he had failed either to bewilder or to charm.

"Madam!" he cried, saluting. "Mr. Francis Ravenel, delightful son of a delightful mother! The top of the evening to both of ye." And with a considered manner he made a stage exit, and Frank and Madam Ravenel heard the gay voice—

"... most excellent Turk,
For I'm fond of tobacco and ladies—"

coming back with the clatter of a horse's hoofs through the fading sunlight over the dew of the daisies.

"Well," said Mrs. Ravenel, her eyes dancing with merry light, "isn't he delightful?"

"Delightful!" Frank repeated. "Is he? I wonder. Shrewd, cool-headed, cruel, I think—subtle as well."

"Nonsense," Mrs. Ravenel interrupted, with a smile which might not have been so mirthful had she seen at that moment the man of whom she spoke.

Near the north gate McDermott had brought his horse suddenly to a walk. There was no longer gayety in his manner or his face. The merry light had left his eyes, and in its place shone a gleam, steady and cold, as only the eye of the intellectual Irish can be.

"And so that is the son! An unco man for the lassies, like his father before him." His eyelids drew together as he spoke. "Handsome, too—with a knowledge of life. It's a pity!" he said. "It's a pity! But he may not interfere. If he does, well—even if he does, the gods are with the Irish!"

II

THE MEETING IN THE WOODS

INSTEAD of entering the drawing-room after Dermott's departure, Frank turned with some abruptness toward Mrs. Ravenel.

"I am going for a walk, mother," he said, with no suggestion that she accompany him; and her intimate acquaintance with Francis, sixth of the name, made her understand with some accuracy the moods of his son, Francis seventh.

"You are handsomer than ever, Frank!" she exclaimed, as if in answer to the suggestion.

"You spoil me, mother," he returned, with a smile.

"Women have always done that—" she began.

"And you more than any other," Frank broke in, kissing her, with a deference of manner singularly his own.

"There may be truth in that," Mrs. Ravenel admitted, a fine sense of humor marked by the grudging tone in which she spoke. "I remember that

only yesterday I was in a rage because the roses were not further open to welcome you home."

"Nature *is* unappreciative," he returned; and the gray eyes with the level lids looked into the blue ones with the level lids, and both laughed.

For a space Mrs. Ravenel contemplated him, the ecstasy of motherhood illuminating the glance.

"You are quite the handsomest human being I ever saw, Frank—though I think I said something like that before."

"You are, of course, unprejudiced, lady mother," he laughed back from the lowest step.

"It's natural I should be—being only a mother," she explained, gayly.

"Ah," she went on, "I am so happy to have you at home with me! *Not* happy at having asked those people down. They come on the twenty-seventh."

"Whom have you asked?"

"The Prescotts."

"Good."

"The Porters and Sallie Maddox."

"Better."

"And Anne Lennox."

There was a silence.

"Did I hear you say 'best'?" Mrs. Ravenel inquired.

"By some wanderment of mind, I forgot it," Frank returned, lightly.

"I am always subtle in my methods," his mother continued. "Note the adroitness now. Why don't you marry her, Frank?"

"Do you think she would marry me?"

"Don't be foolish. Anne is devoted to you, and you must marry some one. You are an only son. There is the family name to be thought of, and there must be a Francis eighth to inherit the good looks of Francis seventh, must there not? And how I shall hate it!" she added, truthfully.

Again a silence fell between them before Frank turned the talk with intention in word and tone.

"About this new overseer?" he asked. "Satisfactory?"

"When not drunk—very."

"Does it"—he smiled—"I mean the drunkenness, not the satisfaction—occur frequently?"

"I am afraid it does."

"What did McDermott say his name is?"

"Patrick Dulany."

"French, I suppose?" he suggested.

"By all the laws of inference," his mother returned, with an answering gleam in her eye.

"There seems to have been a Celtic invasion

of the Carolinas during my absence. Has he a family?"

"Only a daughter." And as Frank turned to leave her Mrs. Ravenel asked, lightly: "How long do you intend to stay here, Frank?"

"I have made no plans," he answered; but going down the carriageway he said to himself, with a smile: "Mother shows her hand too plainly. The girl is evidently young and pretty."

The plantation had never seemed so beautiful to him. The wild roses were in bloom; the fringe-trees and dogwood hung white along the river-banks; the golden azaleas, nodding wake-robins, and muskadine flowers looked up at them from below, while the cotton spread its green tufts miles and miles away to a sunlit horizon.

Swinging along the road outside the park, the half-formed plan to visit the overseer left him, and purposeless he climbed the hill to Chestnut Ridge. Something in the occasion of his home-coming after a two years' absence—his mother's reference to his marriage, his remembrances of Anne Lennox—had brought back to his face its habitual expression of sadness. And more than he would have acknowledged was a disquietude caused by his instant resentment of the existence of Dermott McDermott. Never in his

life had he felt more strongly the need for companionship. He had been loved by many women. He had never been believed in by any.

Passionate, proud, intolerant, full of prejudice, conscious by twenty-six years' experience of a most magnetic power with women, he came to the edge of the far wood as lawless a man, in as lawless a mood, as the Carolinas had ever seen—a locality where lawless men have not been wanting.

Suddenly, through the twilight, he heard a voice—a woman's voice—singing, and by instinct he knew that the singer was alone and conscious of nothing save the song.

At the top of the rise, under a group of beeches, with both arms stretched along a bar fence, a girl stood, the black of her hair in silhouette against the gold of the sky. He noted the slender grace of her body as she leaned backward, and listened to her voice, Heaven-given, vibrant, caressing—*juste*, as the French have it—singing an old song.

He had heard it hundreds of times cheapened by lack of temperament, lack of voice, lack of taste; but as he listened, though little versed in music, he knew that it was a great voice that sang it and a great personality which interpreted it. With the song still trembling through the

silence the singer turned toward him, and, man of the world and many loves as he had been, an unknown feeling came at sight of her.

A flower of a girl—"of fire and dew," delicate features, nose tip-tilted, a chin firmly modelled under the rounded flesh, and eyes bright with the wonder and pride of life. She wore a short-waisted black frock, scant of skirt and cut away at the neck. It was in this same frock that the Sargent picture of her was painted — but that was years afterward; and although she was motionless, one knew from her slender figure and arched feet that she moved with fire and spirit. Her hair was very dark, though red showed through it in a strong light, and her cheeks had the dusky pink of an October peach. But it was the eyes that held and allowed no forgetting; Ravenel always held they were violet, and Josef, who saw her every day for years, spoke them gray; but Dermott McDermott was firm as to their being blue until the day she visited him about the railroad business, when he afterward described them "as black as chaos," adding a word or two about her deil's temper as well. The truth was that the color of them changed with her emotions, but the wistfulness of them remained ever the same. Dermott, in some lines

he wrote of her in Paris, described them as "corn-flowers in a mist filled with the poetry and passion of a great and misunderstood people," and though "over-poetic," as he himself said afterward, "the thought was none so bad."

Suddenly the languor seemed to leave her, and she stood alert, chin drawn in, hands clasped before her, and began the recitative to the "*Ah! Fors e lui.*" Twice she stopped abruptly, taking a tone a second time, listening as she did so, her head, birdlike, on one side with a concentrated attention. After the last low note, which was round and low like an organ tone, she resumed her old position with arms outstretched upon the fence.

As Frank came up the path their eyes met, and he removed his hat, holding it at his side, as one who did not intend to resume it. Standing thus, he bore himself, if one might use the word of a man, with a certain sweetness, an entire seeming self-forgetfulness, as though the one to whom he spoke occupied his entire thought.

"It is Miss Dulany?" he inquired, with a smile which seemed to ask pardon for his temerity.

"I am Katrine Dulany," the girl answered, gravely, for the readjustment from the music and the silence was not easily made.

"I was fortunate enough to hear you sing. It

almost made me forget to say that I am Mr. Ravenel."

"I know," Katrine answered. "The plantation has expected your coming."

A silence followed, during which, with no embarrassment, she retained her position, waiting for him to pass. The indifference of it pleased him.

"I was going to see your father at the lodge. The roads are unfamiliar, and the path, after two years' absence, a bit lonely." The sadness which accompanied the words was honest, but it seemed for some more personal sorrow than it was.

"My father is not well," Katrine said, hastily. "I am afraid you cannot see him, Mr. Ravenel. May I ask him to go to you to-morrow instead?" There was entreaty in her voice, and Frank knew the truth on an instant.

"I cannot have you carrying messages for me."

"Seeing that I offered myself"—she suggested, with a smile.

"—is no reason that I should trespass on your kindness, so I shall carry my message myself." This quite firmly.

"I will sing again if you stay." She looked at him through her long lashes without turning

her head. "You see," she added, "I have made up my mind."

"It's a premium on discourtesy," he answered, "but I yield."

Near the place where she stood there was a fallen log, and he seated himself upon it, placing his hat on the ground as though for a continued stay, regarding her curiously.

She was the daughter of his drunken overseer, a child in years, yet she showed neither embarrassment nor eagerness; indeed, she conveyed to him the impression that it was profoundly equal to her whether he went or stayed.

"Tell me," he said, "before you sing, where have you studied?"

"I?" she laughed, but the laugh was not all mirthful. "In Paris, in London, in Rome, in New York." There was bitterness in her tone. "I am a *gamin* of the world, monsieur."

"Tell me," he repeated, insistently.

She made no response, but stood, with her profile toward him, looking into the sunset.

"Won't you tell me?" he asked again, his tone more intimate than before.

"Ah, why should I?" And then, with a sudden veering: "After all, there is little to tell. I was born in Paris of poor—but Irish—parents." She

smiled as she spoke. "My mother was a great singer, whose name I will not call. She married my father; left him and me. I do not remember her. Since her death my father has been a spent man. We have wandered from place to place. When he found work I was sent to some convent near by. The Sisters have taught me. For three months I studied with Barili. I have sung in the churches. Finally, Mr. McDermott, on the next plantation, met us in New York, recommended my father for this work, and we came here."

She turned from him as she ended the telling. "What shall I sing?" she asked.

"'The Serenade.'"

"Schubert's?"

"There is but one."

"It is difficult without the accompaniment, but I will try:

"'All the stars keep watch in heaven
While I sing to thee,
And the night for love was given—
Darling, come to me—
Darling, come to me!'"

She ended, her hands clasped before her, her lithe figure, by God-given instinct for song, leaned forward, and Francis Ravenel was con-

scious that the passion in the voice had nothing to do with his presence; that it was the music alone of which she thought, and for the first time in his life he touched the edge of the knowledge that *a great gift sets its owner as a thing apart.*

"Sometime," he said, "when you have become famous, and all the world is singing your praises, I shall say, 'Once she sang for me alone, at twilight, under the beeches, in a far land,' and the people will take off their hats to me, as to one who has had much honor."

He smiled as he spoke. It was the smile or the praise of the song, or a cause too subtle to name, that changed her. She had already seemed an indifferent woman, a great artist, a careless *Bohémienne* in her speech; but for the next change he was unprepared: it was a pleading child with wistful eyes who seated herself beside him, not remotely through any self-consciousness, but near to him, where speech could be conveniently exchanged.

"Mr. Ravenel," she began, "I had thought to keep it from you, but you are different—the *most* different person I ever saw." A dimple came in her cheek as she smiled. "And so I am going to tell you everything." She made a little outward gesture of the hands, as though casting discre-

tion to the wind. "My father drinks. It began with his great sorrow. It is not all the time, but frequently. I had hoped that down here he would be better. He is not, and you will have to get another overseer. It is not just to you to have my father in charge. Only I think that perhaps such times as he is himself some work might be found for him. It is so peaceful here; I do not want to go away."

"You shall not go away."

The words were spoken quietly, but for the first time in her life Katrine Dulany felt there was some one of great power to whom she could turn for help, and her woman heart thrilled at the words.

"You mustn't feel about it as you do, either," Frank continued. "The time has gone by for thinking of your father's trouble as anything except a disease—a disease which very frequently can be cured."

"Ah!" she cried, "do you think it would be possible?"

"I have known many cases. Is your father good to you?" he asked, abruptly.

"Sick or well, with money or without, he is the kindest father in the world. Save in one way, it is always *for* me he thinks."

Her hand lay on the log. It was small and white, and she was very beautiful. Frank had seldom resisted temptation. This one he did not even try to resist, and he placed his hand over hers.

"Katrine," he said, "I am not a particularly good man, but the gods have willed that we meet —meet in strange moods and a strange way. I am a better man to-night than I have ever been in my life. It's the music, maybe, or the fringed gentian, or the whippoorwills." There was love-making in every tone of his voice. "Whatever it is, it makes me want to help you. May I? Will you trust me?"

She turned her hand upward, as a child might have done, to clasp his, looking him full in the eyes as she did so.

"Utterly," she said.

"I have not always been considered trustworthy," he explained, lightly.

"People may not have understood you." There was a sweet explaining in her voice.

"Which may have been, on the whole, fortunate for me," he answered, with a curious smile.

"Don't," she said—"don't talk of yourself like that. I know you are good, good, *good!*"

"Thank you," and again there came to him

the throb in the throat he had felt when their eyes first met. "Believe me," he said, "I shall always try to be—to you," and as he spoke he raised her hand to his lips and kissed it.

A noise startled him. Some one was approaching with uncertain footsteps and a shuffling gait, and at the sound the girl's face turned crimson.

"Katrine, little Katrine, where are you?" a voice cried, thickly and uncertainly, as a man came from under the gloom of the trees. There was not a moment's hesitation. The child rose and put her arms around the figure with a divine, womanly gesture, as though to shield him and his infirmities from the whole world. It was the action of one ashamed to be ashamed.

"Daddy," she said, laying her head against his shoulder, "this is Mr. Ravenel!"

III

A KINDNESS WITH MIXED MOTIVES

IN the walk home through the gloom of the night Frank Ravenel thought of many things not hitherto considered in his philosophy. The women whom he had known had presented few complexities to him. That he should be giving a second thought to Katrine Dulany seemed humorous; but the more he resolved to put her from his thoughts the more vivid the memory of her became. He recalled his emotion when their eyes first met, and the remembrance brought again the tightening of the throat which he had on the hilltop. He could feel the clinging pressure of the slender hand, could hear again the voice like a caress, and her words, "You are good—good—good!" kept repeating themselves somewhere in the recesses of his brain to the tune of an old song.

"Good!" he ejaculated. "God, if she only knew!"

He had stated to his mother at the outset of

the walk that he had no plans; but in reality his summer had been fairly well arranged before his return, lacking only a few set dates to fill the time till October. The party at Ravenel would be over in a fortnight, and then—the thought of another woman who loved him and a certain husband yachting on the Mediterranean crossed his mind for an instant with annoyance and a little shame.

The girl on the hill had had a more disturbing effect than any one that ever came into his life before. Looking down the vista of probable events, he saw nothing but trouble for her if he remained at Ravenel—saw it as reasonably and as logically as though he were contemplating the temptation of another. An affair with the daughter of his overseer, a very young person, was a manifest impossibility for him, Francis Ravenel; his pride and such honor as he had where women were concerned forbade it. But even as he reached this decision the voice of gold came back to him:

> "And the night for love was given—
> Darling, come to me!"

How she could love a man! He recalled her gesture when she said: "I will tell you everything"!

The glance through the lashes—"I've a fancy for my own way"! the forgetting of his presence for the song-singing and the sunset, coming back to talk with him; a pleading child!

By the lake he paused, and, looking into the moon-lit water, came to his conclusions sanely enough. He would see her no more. There would be many people for the next fortnight to occupy his time; the coming folks were interesting. Anne Lennox would be there; the time would pass; he would leave Ravenel; but as he dropped asleep a voice seemed to call to him through the pines, and he knew he would not go.

The next morning before coffee he wrote to Dr. Johnston, the great specialist in alcoholic diseases, urging him to come to Ravenel at his earliest convenience. "There is a man to be helped," he wrote, "and neither money nor brains are to be spared in the helping."

Through the breakfast the memory of Katrine was vividly with him. He recalled, with the approval of an aristocrat in taste, the daintiness of her movements, the delicacy of her hands as they lay open on the fence, even her indifference to him, to him, who was in no wise accustomed to indifference in women.

At twilight he went to the Chestnut Ridge, but Katrine was not there, nor did she come. The following day he went again with a similar resulting. The third day he saw her about noon on the river-bank, and she waved her hand to him in a cavalier fashion, disappearing into a small copse of dogwood, not to reappear. The thing had become amusing.

During this time he saw neither Dermott McDermott nor the new overseer, whom he learned was at Marlton on affairs concerning a sawmill.

The fourth day after his meeting with Katrine a message from the great doctor gave him the dignity of a mission, and he rode to the old lodge to show her the letter, which said that Dr. Johnston would be at Ravenel soon.

There was eagerness in his gait and eyes as he mounted his horse, and as he rode down the carriageway standing in his stirrups, waving his cap to his mother with a "Tallyho to the hounds," he had never looked handsomer nor had more of an air of carrying all before him, as was right, she thought, for a Ravenel.

The old gate-lodge on the Ravenel place stands on the north branch of the road which leads to Three Poplar Inn. It is built of pale-

colored English brick and gray stones, and runs upward to the height of two stories, with broad doorways and wide windows peeping through ivy which covers the place from foundation to roof.

Frank remembered it as a drear-looking, lonesome place during the occupancy of the former incumbent. Instead, he found a reclaimed garden; hedges of laurel, trim and straight; old-fashioned flowers, snowballs, gillybells, great pink-and-white peonies; and over the front on trellises, by the gate and doorway, scrambles of scarlet roses against the green and the ivied walls.

In the doorway Nora O'Grady, a short, wide woman of fifty or thereabout, was singing at a spinning-wheel. She had a kind, yellow face with high cheek-bones, and dark eyes which seemed darker by reason of the snowy hair showing under a mob cap. Her chin was square and pointed upward like old Mother Hubbard's, and she could talk of batter-cakes or home rule with humorous volubility, and smoke a pipe with the manner of a condescending duchess.

She had, as Frank found afterward, an excellent gift at anecdote, but a clipping pronunciation of English by reason of having spoken nothing but the Erse until she was grown. Added to

this was an entirely illogical ignorance of certain well-known words, and Katrine told him later that once when Nora was asked if the dinner was postponed, she answered: "It was pork."

For fifteen years this strange old creature and her boy Barney had followed the seesawing fortunes of the Dulanys, accompanying their gypsy-like sojournings with great loyalty and joyousness.

She rose from her spinning as Ravenel approached.

"Is Miss Katrine at home?" he inquired.

Nora dropped a courtesy, and with the tail of her eye observed, labelled, and docketed Francis Ravenel.

"Will your lordship be seated," she said. "Miss Katrine will be back in a minute. She's gone to ask after Miranda's baby. Nothin' seems able to stop her from regardin' the naygurs as human beings. If 'twere not that I know she'd be here immejit I'd go afther her mysel', and not keep your lordship waitin'."

She motioned him to a wide settle on the porch with an alert hospitality. In her heart she preferred Dermott McDermott to all possible suitors for Katrine, but if this was another jo, as the Scotch say, so much the better, for one might

urge the other on, she thought, with primitive sagacity.

"Would ye have a drop of Scotch?" she asked, and upon Francis declining she reseated herself at her wheel, "with his permission," as she put it, delighted, Celtlike, at the chance for conversation. "Ye're perhaps," she says, with some humor, "like the man in the old, old tale when a friend asked him to take a drink. He said he couldn't for three reasons. First, he'd promised his mother he never would drink; second, his doctor had tould him he mustn't drink; and, third, he'd just had a drink."

Frank laughed back at the merry old woman as she sat at the whirring wheel, her accustomed eyes scarcely glancing at the work in her scrutiny of him.

"Dulany's not at home this day. I'm sorry," she went on. "He's off about the sawmill of that triflin' Shehan man. Did ye hear that about his telegraph, Mr. Ravenel? No? It's a funny tale. Ye know that old mill of yours ain't worth more than a few hunder dollars. But Dulany saw an advertisement for a new kind of machinery, and he wrote the firm to ask them what it would cost to have it put in. They sint back the word: tin thousand dollars, and would he

plaze lit thim know immejit if it was wanted. He didn't wait to write. He telegraphed:

"'If a man had ten thousand dollars, what in hell would he want with a sawmill?'"

Frank laughed aloud again, uncomprehending the fact that the shrewd little woman was deliberately holding him with her tales till Katrine returned.

Inside the house he heard a note, struck suddenly, and repeated over and over in a voice little above a whisper.

"She's come in the other way. I'll tell her your lordship's wantin' her," said Nora O'Grady, disappearing.

He looked about him in great content. Things seemed so much as he desired them to be—the roses, the old furniture, the spinning-wheel, the coiffed peasant woman—that he waited for Katrine's coming, fearing that she should be less beautiful than he remembered her.

With some surprise he heard a laugh (he had not thought of her as a girl who laughed) so merry, so infectious that he found himself wondering what caused it as the girl herself came through the doorway to greet him, her rose face radiant, her eyes shining, her hand outstretched.

She was more loveworthy, more imperious, than he remembered her, a thing which bewildered him as he thought of her entreating smile, and her wistful and approving eyes.

She wore white, so simply made as to have something statuesque about the lines of the gown, and cut from the throat to show the poise of the head and the curls at the back of the neck.

"I could scarcely believe Nora when she said it was you. Father is at Marlton. I was so lonely. It is good of you to come, even if only on business. You are riding?" she asked, regarding his clothes.

"Yes," he answered. "I am going to the world's end."

"You will be sorry," she returned, quickly. "I have been there. Carolina is better. Stay here!"

She seated herself beside him on the settle as she spoke, and the odor of the red rose she wore at her breast came to him with the words.

He had taken off his hat and leaned his bare brown head against the high back of the bench.

"You see," he began, his eyelids drawn together in his own way, his eyes fastened upon some remote distance, "I, too, have been lonely.

The only companionable person within hundreds of miles has refused me her society. I have been driven, as it were, to the world's end."

"Do you mean me?" Katrine asked, smiling, and looking at him with eyes full of surprise.

"It is perhaps Nora to whom I refer," he suggested, whimsically.

"She is not always companionable — Nora," Katrine returned; "and to-day she is not pleased with me, so I like her less than usual. She purposed to cook nettles in the potatoes, and I remonstrated, and — I have not absented myself from your society," she said, abruptly breaking her talk after a woman's way.

"Then why didn't you watch the sunset from the Chestnut Ridge last night and the night before and the night before that?" he asked.

"Why didn't I watch the sunset from the Chestnut Ridge?" she repeated after him, as though not understanding; and then, with a slow, steady smile, looking straight in his eyes, "The thought never occurred to me," she said.

No studied coquetry could have piqued him as this simple statement, which he felt to be the plain truth. He had taken three long walks on the off-chance of meeting a girl who apparently had forgotten his existence, and although the

thought was humorous it stirred in him a determination to make his existence a remembered thing to her.

"But, if I had known," she explained, and the selflessness and sweetness of her as she spoke touched him strangely—"if I had thought you wanted to talk to me, I should have been glad to come."

Fortunately there remained to him a dignified explanation of his suggestion.

"I thought you might come, not so much to see the sunsets as in the hope of seeing me. I promised to help you when I could. I thought you might be interested to know that I had kept my promise. If any one can help your father it is Dr. Johnston." He gave the letter to her as he spoke. "He is coming to Ravenel to-morrow."

In an instant her face softened; her eyes became suffused by a soft, warm light, and she looked up at him through a sudden mist of tears.

"The interview must be arranged," he went on. But Katrine interrupted him:

"Ah! It will be easy enough. Father is as anxious as I am to be himself again. You do not know daddy, Mr. Ravenel," she explained, a proud loyalty in her tone. "He has not been

himself before you; but in Paris, in Dublin, he was welcomed everywhere; his wit was the keenest, with never an edge that hurt; his stories the brightest, and always of the kind that made you love the people of whom they were told. He will be home to-night. Will the doctor come here? I want to tell him *everything*, and then, when he has seen father, you can tell me what to do. You see, I haven't thanked you yet," she said, abruptly.

"To know that you are pleased is enough. Besides, I have, on some few occasions, drifted into doing a kind act for the act's sake," he said; adding: "Not often, it's true, but occasionally."

"You have made me, oh, so happy, and hopeful—as I have never been before in all my life. It seems like one of the fairy stories in which one's wishes all come true."

"And if it were given you to have whatever you wished, what would you ask for, Katrine?"

"To have father well. And then," her face became illuminated, "to study with Josef."

"Josef?" He repeated the great name interrogatively.

"You have not heard of him?" she asked, incredulously.

He made a sign in the negative.

"He is the greatest teacher in the world," she explained, as though there could be no doubting.

"Which is perhaps the reason I have never heard of him," he answered, with a smile. "From your enthusiasm I am led to judge it is music which he teaches."

"Yes," she answered; "but he teaches more than that. I knew a girl in Paris who studied with him. She was quite intricate and self-seeking when she began. And in six months he had changed her whole nature. She became elemental and direct, and," she put her hands together and threw them apart with the gesture which he knew so well, "and splendid! Like Shakespeare's women!" she finished.

"Gracious Heaven, hear!" said Frank. "And does this miracle-worker live uncrowned?"

"Ah, don't!" she said, her sincerity and enthusiasm reproving his scoffing tone. "You see"—there was sweetness and an apologetic note in her voice as she continued—"I believe in him so much it hurts to have you speak so. Josef says that when woman developed to the point of needing more education, there was nothing ready to give her except the same thing they gave men; that because certain studies had been proven all right for them they were given ready-

made to women, and they didn't fit. He believes women should be trained to develop the thing we call their instinct. He says it's the psychic force which must in the end rule the world. One of the girls in Paris said 'he stretched your soul.'"

"I shall not permit you to go to him," Frank interrupted, gravely.

She regarded him, a question in her glance. "Why?" she asked.

"Because if your soul was any larger, Katrine, there would be no room for it here below. It crowds the earth a little as it is. No," he finished, with conviction, "you shall never go to study with Josef. Music is all right. But that soul-stretching" — he smiled at this phrase — "that would be all wrong for you. I want you exactly as you are."

IV

THE PROMISE IN THE ROSE GARDEN

A SILENCE fell between them, broken only by the whirring of Nora's wheel and the robin's chatter before Katrine inquired:

"Are you still bent on that expedition to that world's end?"

"I could," he returned, "be persuaded from it, or at least to postpone it. If by any chance I were invited to luncheon in a certain garden—an old-fashioned garden, with box and peonies, and," he raised his head to look down over the flowers—"and some queer purple things like bells whose name I have forgotten, under a trellis of roses, with—"

"Me," she interrupted, with a laugh. "We'll make a party, as the children say. Nora will give us broiled chicken and yellow wine in the long-necked glasses, and cake with nuts in it, and you," she stopped for a second, the dimple in the left cheek showing itself, "will give all of your

nuts to me; for it is well to sacrifice for another," she said, with a laugh, "and exceeding well," she added, "that I should have the nuts."

Having ordered the luncheon, they went together down the gravelled pathway to the grape arbor, which was grown over with sweet, old-fashioned climbing roses, through which the sunlight filtered in wavy lights on the quaint low rocker, the long rattan couch, the pillows of gay hue, the table covered with books and sewing. Frank paused at the archway and looked in.

"I have found it," he said.

"What?" she asked.

"The world's end," he answered.

"You must," she explained, "*really* to appreciate this place, lie on the couch so that you may see the wistaria on the gray wall. You should then light a cigarette and have the table brought near, that you may ring for what you want." She moved the table toward him as she spoke. "And I will take this chair beside you. If you want me to talk to you I shall do so; if you want me to sing, I will do that; or if the king desires silence"—she made an obeisance before him as of great humility—"I can even accomplish that, though it is difficult for a woman," she added, with a laugh.

It was dangerous repayment of a kindness: this entire forgetfulness of herself in her gratitude to him; this essence of the wine of flattery, of Irish flattery, which has ever a peculiar bouquet of its own.

"You have a good friend in McDermott," Francis said, abruptly.

"Yes; he has been kind to us, most kind," Katrine answered.

"For old sake's sake?" Frank suggested.

"Scarcely for that. We never knew him until father met him quite by accident in New York two years ago."

"Didn't they fight together in India?" Frank inquired.

"In India!" Katrine repeated. "Father was never in India. Will some one have been telling you that McDermott and he fought together in India, Mr. Ravenel?" she asked, in astonishment.

Frank sat upright, regarding her with amazement.

"Didn't your father save his life at Ramazan?"

It was Katrine's turn to be bewildered.

"I never heard of Ramazan," she said. "Where is it?"

"And he was not present at your father's marriage in Italy?"

Katrine shook her head; but to Ravenel's astonishment she began to wear an amused smile as he repeated McDermott's tale to her bit by bit.

"I understand," she explained, "my father saved him from a horrible attack of the measles in New York. They thought for weeks that he would die."

"But why," Frank demanded, "didn't he say just that?"

"He couldn't!" Katrine stated, as simply and uncritically as a child. "You see, he has the soul of an artist, and there's something about a man of thirty dying of measles impossible for the artistic temperament to contemplate. Ah!" she said, with gentle pleading in her voice for an absent friend, "he's the greatest liar as well as the most truthful person alive; but you've got to be Irish to understand how that thing can be. He couldn't say my father saved him from the measles. The story of India sounds better—and no one is hurt. Can't ye understand? The gratitude for service rendered is the great thing; to remember a kindness has been done; and whether he gives as reason for his gratitude Ramazan or the measles, what is the difference? Do you know"—there came an apologetic look and

blush to her face as she spoke, "that I myself, when it comes to things of the heart—" she ended the sentence with a laugh and a gesture of self-depreciation. "There was once a little child in Killybegs," she explained, "a girl, who wanted to be a boy, and she cried all of the time because she wasn't. So I told her *she was a boy*, and it comforted her for quite a year. You see, it made her happy."

"Oh," Francis laughed, "you incomprehensible Celts!"

"Incomprehensible, indeed!" she said. "Incomprehensible!"

A singing voice broke the talk, rolling strongly, vibrantly through the leaves, a lawless, insistent voice, and Dermott McDermott, with the reins loosened on his horse's neck, and his ardent eyes looking upward to heaven's blue, rode by the other side of the privet hedge:

"'War-battered dogs are we,
Fighters in every clime,
Fillers of trench and grave,
Mockers be-mocked by time.
War dogs hungry and gray,
Gnawing a naked bone,
Fighting in every clime
Every cause but our own.'"

"Katrine," Frank said, as they listened to the singing die away, "what is Dermott McDermott doing in the Carolinas? That story of the Mainwaring titles is nonsense. He is here on some other business."

"I am not sure," she answered. "I cannot be certain, but I think it has something to do with Ravenel. I think it has to do with you."

"With me?" Frank sat erect. "Do you know," he said, after some thought, "absurd as it may seem, Katrine, I think so, too."

The sun was far behind the pines when he rose to leave, flattered, softened, with the remembrance of caressing gray eyes, of a voice full of strange cadence, and speech with quaint humor and dramatic turns to the sentences.

"Good-bye," he said, standing by the boxwood arch. "I am your debtor, Miss Dulany, for one perfectly happy day."

"My debtor!" she repeated, looking at him through sudden tears. "I've known rich men before now, men richer than you, Mr. Ravenel; and great men, though none greater than yourself; and handsome men as well, though here"—and the mutinous humor of her showed in the speech—"I can't truthfully say I've ever

seen any handsomer than you are this minute, as you stand looking down at me. It's your eyes, or something in your nature, perhaps, that sets you apart from others in your looks. But be that all as it may, it's neither your riches nor your birth nor your good looks that I am thinking about, but your kind heart. I shall never forget you, never in all my life, for what you've done for me; and if the time ever comes when you need a friend, for sometimes a man needs the help that only a woman can give, will you remember me then, for I'll come from the ends of the earth to serve you?" And before he was aware of such an intention, in an ecstasy of gratitude, she raised his hand to her lips and kissed it.

V

FRANK FALLS FURTHER UNDER KATRINE'S INFLUENCE

WHEN Frank came out on the porch the next morning at Ravenel, he found Patrick Dulany waiting on horse by the main steps. It was the first time the two men had met in daylight, and with the keenest interest Mr. Ravenel inspected his strange overseer; for in the week since his return he had heard much of his wit and his ability.

He found him to be a large man with a broad face tanned to the hue of a mulatto. His eyes were light blue with the fulness under them of people who have gift in speech. His silver hair, of which he had a great quantity, set strangely around his dark face, falling low over a brow markedly intellectual. But it was the mouth and chin at which Ravenel most wondered, for their lines were strong, the lips full and finely chiselled, showing, one could have sworn, high birth and great resolution.

His clothes were of tweed, with a riding-cap far back on his head, and he rode with an excellent seat. Upon seeing Mr. Ravenel he dismounted, removed his cap, and advanced with outstretched hand, in the manner of one welcoming home an old friend.

"'Twas the sawmill business that kept me from seeing you sooner, Mr. Ravenel," he began. "But Katrine's been telling me of you, with some worry, I think, in her gentle soul for fear that you may not understand our friend McDermott."

Francis replied with a comprehending smile.

"Now that I've seen ye," said Dulany, "I *know* you'll understand. He has a peculiarity of nature. He likes to arrange certain unimportant details of life that they may sound better in the telling. But one has a small knowledge of human nature if he discount McDermott because of this. In Ireland his name is a household word. He's here to-day, gone to-morrow. He works like a galley-slave; his word is as good as his bond when given in honor. And 'tis for others he works always. Generous, he gives all, all, all! his work, his brain, the money it earns, everything! His is a great soul, a very great soul. There's not a man in America, barring the President, who has his personal

power. Quietly, his name unworded in the newspapers, he holds Tammany in his hand. I can't tell you how enthusiastic I am about him! Mines, politics, Wall Street, he's into them all, a million ideas a minute! Helps the chap that's down. He helps every one with whom he comes in contact. He has helped me."

His sadness of tone introduced the next statement better than words could have done.

"Mr. Ravenel," he said, "I have a confession to make to you. I drink." He looked Frank squarely in the face as he spoke, with no flinching. "Ye may have heard it from one or another since ye've been back. It's been a habit of mine for some time. I was not myself the other evening when I met you on the hill. The worst of it is," and he spoke the words brightly and bravely, "I've no excuse for it, if there can be found an excusing for such a habit. The thing is growing upon me in this solitude. I try, God alone knows how I try, for Katrine's sake, to resist; but only those who have fought the thing can realize what its temptations are. However, I've been thinking that if I drink too much, or fail to suit you, it might make it easier for you to tell me to go, if you knew it would be better for me that I went."

"I am hoping that you will not find it necessary to go, Mr. Dulany. The plantation has never been in better shape."

"And I'm glad to hear you say that, sir," was the answer. "Well"—hopefully—"things may change for the better in me, and so, good-day," and spurring his horse he was off at a gallop down the broad road, and Ravenel stood listening to the horse's hoofs clatter over the bridge, strike the soft road under the pines, and die away in silence before he turned into the bridle-path which led to the stables.

And a strange thing occurred but a few minutes after this interview, when Frank made his daily visit to the stables. One of the head grooms explained a horse's lameness to him as due to a bad place in the road near the north gate which, he finished, would probably not be mended until Mr. Dulany was over "his coming attack."

"Is he drinking again?" Ravenel asked.

"For three days past," the groom answered.

Francis made no comment whatever, but the next day he discovered the man's suspicions justified, and the third, as he rode to Marlton, he saw Katrine, a pale-faced, desolate little figure, sitting on the garden bench, her head in her hands, the picture of despair. About five o'clock Jerry

drove to the station for Dr. Johnston, and the same evening after the dinner Nora O'Grady's son, a red-haired, unkempt boy of seventeen, brought a short letter from Katrine, asking that the doctor be sent as soon as possible.

"Mr. Dulany is drinking?" Frank said, interrogatively, to the youth.

"Something fierce," was the laconic answer.

"Is he better this evening?"

"Worse. Heart's actin' up," the boy responded.

At the end of the week, after three days spent with the Dulanys, at the old lodge, Dr. Johnston and Francis sat together at the dinner-table at Ravenel. Mrs. Ravenel had left them, and the great doctor, in the admirably restrained and cautious language of the scientific mind, gave his findings in the case, as it were.

"Mr. Dulany's habits," the great doctor began, "I should say, after such superficial investigation as I have been able to make, may be cured. One thing I have noted with pleasure. He has lost none of his mental integrity. He is capable of the truth concerning himself. Generally those given to the alcoholic habit deny everything or secrete everything concerning it when sober. Sometimes they are sentimental over it, given to self-pity, with even a certain desire for

dramatic effects in the statements about themselves. Dulany is still, so far as I can judge, honest. To-day he told me the history of himself, with a gay humor in the telling. He is a descendant, it seems, of the great and the gifted. There are lawless loves behind him, a picturesque ancestry, artistic and, on the wrong side of the blanket, aristocratic as well."

"It is the ancestry of genius," Francis answered.

"It is the ancestry of Katrine Dulany," Dr. Johnston returned, looking at Frank with an untranslatable smile.

A silence fell between them, broken at length by the doctor. "I have decided to take Mr. Dulany to New York with me. I shall keep him near me as long as is necessary. If there is no organic trouble, of which I have some fear, the case will be simple enough, if there is the desire in him to help me. He was keen to have his daughter go with him, but I told him frankly it was better that she should not go. He leans too much on her. He must strengthen his own will; he must learn to rely on himself."

As the doctor spoke it was not of Patrick Dulany that Francis thought, but of Katrine. The people were coming on the twenty-seventh;

it was now but the seventeenth. He would have her to himself for ten days, ten days of those caressing eyes, of the charming voice and open adulation, and then? He closed his eyes to whatever lay beyond. He would go away to keep his engagements and forget. He always had forgotten; he would, he thought, be able always to forget.

And the ten days were his; days on the river fishing by the Indian Rocks, or drifting with the current under the dogwoods' white, open faces down to the falls; days with lunches in the rose-garden, and Abt and Schubert songs under the pines at twilight, when their hands touched in the exchange of a flower or a book and lingered in the touching; when their eyes had learned the answering of each other with no spoken word. And the question and answer were the same in the Garden of Eden, before man and woman made their first great mistake and did the thing that was intended for them to do.

For Frank this companionship was unutterably sweet. He enjoyed the small and unimportant events of their intercourse; the way Katrine would save flowers for him to wear, pinning them in his coat with a flushed cheek, or read, with an ecstasy of appreciation, a line from some great writer, marking a meaning he had never found, or laugh

at his old riding-clothes, his Southern prejudices, saying once: "To a *man* of the world like myself, these ideas seem trivial."

On one of these ten precious days the lawyers at Marlton telephoned him to obtain an interview. The business was important, and he started immediately for a conference with them. By the fence opening into the main road from the lodge he found Katrine, in her high-waisted black frock, looking out between the bars of the great swinging gate, with a radiance about her, an inconsequential joy such as he had never seen before in any human being. She had a letter tucked in her breast, and at sight of him she touched it.

"He is getting better, better, better, and the doctor writes he may be quite himself again," she said, with no salutation whatever, her face a wonder to behold.

"I am rejoiced more than I can say, Katrine," he answered.

"You have been so good," she replied, gratefully.

"Thank you," he said, gravely, and though the words were trivial the manner gave them significance.

"Were you coming to call on me?" Katrine inquired.

Frank shook his head. "The lawyers at Marlton are waiting for me."

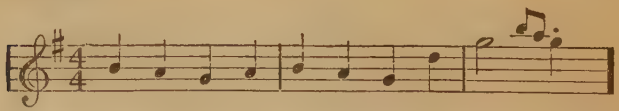
"Stay with me," she said, opening her hand and showing some nuts, as though they might be an inducement to remain. "It's lonesome. I've finished practising. Stay with me!"

"Duty calls," he answered, looking down at her.

"Put your fingers in your ears! If you once listen to her, you can never hear any other thing in life." She folded her arms on one of the bars of the gate, resting her chin upon them, as she looked up at him. "If you will stay with me," she hesitated, searching her mind for further inducements, "I'll tell you tales of Killybegs and the Black Bradley Brothers, who hid their sister in the 'pocheen' barrel"—she waited a minute—"and of the wedding of Peggy Menalis on the old sea-wall."

He shook his head.

"And I'll sing you a funny little song that ends like this:



She sang the tones out sweet and true as a bird. "Is she calling still?" she asked.

"Who?" Frank asked, not following.

"Duty," she answered; and as she spoke she shut her eyes tight and drew the lids together.

"Somehow, I don't hear her so plainly as I did," he returned, with a laugh.

There was another pause, filled by a glance which made his heart throb.

"And if you stayed," she went on, at length, "I could tell you how nice you are."

Frank smiled. "I don't hear her at all now —that Duty person," he said, gayly.

"You are," she hesitated, "a very nice man."

He kept his eyes averted.

"One of the nicest I have ever known."

He fastened his eyes on the Chestnut Ridge.

"The nicest of all," she said, almost in a whisper, her eyes brimming over with laughter.

At the words he sprang to the ground and stood beside her.

"And Duty?" she asked.

"I don't know whether it's Duty or not, but something tells me that there's nothing in all the world of any importance except to stay with you," he answered.

But with his acquiescence there came the veering in her moods for which he had already learned to watch.

"Where were you going?" she asked.

"The lawyers telephoned for me from Marlton."

"They are waiting for you?"

"Yes."

"And you are going to keep them waiting because I asked you to stay?"

"Them or the whole world," he answered.

"King Francis," she said, with a courtesy, "must do no wrong. Here is a flower—a horrible one, it is true, but the only one I have. Wear it, and go to the lawyer men and think of me. Perhaps—this evening—" she hesitated.

"May I come," he said, "early?"

On the evening of the twenty-sixth they sat on the mahogany settle together, in a moonless night, the lilacs and honeysuckle a-bloom around them.

"All those people are coming to-morrow. I wish they were in some other place," he ended, inadequately considering the vehemence of his tone. "Do you, Katrine?" he asked.

She did not answer him.

"Do you, Katrine?" he repeated, insistently.

There was no response.

"Do you wish that we had these ten happy

days to live over? Do you wish that they might come again? Will you miss me?"

She turned toward him with a wistful look, letting her eyes rest in his as she spoke. "I am sorry it is over. I shall miss you more than I can say."

"Thank you." And then, with a mixture of whimsicality and earnestness he continued: "Do you remember the talk we had the other day of Josef?"

"Yes."

"When you told me he believed women to have some undeveloped psychic power which, with study, could be developed to revolutionize the world?"

"I didn't say it so clearly as that, but that is what he means."

"Do you believe it, Katrine?"

"I don't know, Mr. Ravenel."

"Do you believe that if you tried to help me, even if I were far away, you could?"

"Again I don't know, Mr. Ravenel."

"I do," he said, in the tone of one thoroughly convinced. "I have been thinking it over, and have come to the conclusion that Josef is right. You could make me do anything, Katrine. Will you try? In these days to come, when I

am away with all those people, will you keep me from temptation?"

She hesitated for a minute, not knowing whether he was jesting or not.

"Believe me," she said, at length, "I will try."

VI

DERMOTT GIVES A DINNER AT THE OLD LODGE

THE following morning, as she stood clipping the roses, Dermott McDermott leaned over the hedge.

"Will you marry me, Katrine?" he said, with no salutation whatever.

"Will you wait," she inquired, "till I've finished cutting the roses?"

"But I'm in earnest," he announced.

She held the clippers in her gloved hand to shade the sun from her eyes, regarding him in her friendly, companionable way.

"Dermott," she said, "what makes you such a liar?" The word as she spoke it of him seemed almost a compliment.

"You've been associating, I fear, with some narrow and confined spirit, who repeats things exactly as they occurred. I've more imagination!" he explained, with a laugh. "Why should I not change things a bit?" he continued. "Every

Irishman's got to have one of three vices: whiskey, love-making, or lying. Mention me one of any distinction who had none of these!"

"There was St. Patrick," Katrine suggested, a laugh held under her eyelids.

"He's so remote you can prove nothing against him. Take another that I have later news of."

"Wellington."

"He was never an Irishman."

"And Burke."

"And I'm thinkin', begging your pardon, Mistress Katrine, there was a lady to be explained away in his case. No," he said, waving her suggestion far from him, "all the Irish are alike. They've, as I say, one of three vices. I lie, that's why I'm so interestin', especially to the ladies. Suppose I say: 'Old Mrs. O'Hooligan was tripped by a dog in the lane yesterday!' Who cares? Not one soul in a thousand! But instead, with a gesture: 'Did ye hear of the startling adventure of Mrs. O'Hooligan? She was coming home at midnight from a sick friend's' (it's well to throw in a few sympathetic touches if ye can). Suddenly an animal, a strange animal, came by, something like a mad bull' (of course you can enlarge or diminish the animal as required; in the mist of night I have found a

black cat very telling). 'She saw the vision quite plainly. It passed, touched her, there was a word in the air whose significance she was unable to determine, and in the morning the friend was well—or dead.' For conversational purposes it makes no difference."

He wore a broad smile as he spoke, looking down at her with great love and devotion.

"Ye see, Mistress Katrine, the ladies like a little exaggeration. There's Mrs. Ravenel likes me fine, and says it's my temperament; and Peggy of the Poplars is crazy about me; and hundreds in the two continents who'd marry me at a second's notice. I'm a great lover," he laughed somewhat uneasily, keeping his eyes averted, and adding, "when I don't care! Ye see, a woman doesn't mind a bit of exaggeration in a man's love-making," he went on. "Now there was Antony, who threw a world away. What's that! One world! I'd tell her I'd throw away a universe of worlds. Why not be extravagant! It's all," he laughed again softly, "it's all 'hot air,' anyway."

"And yet you're a truthful person, Dermott McDermott. There's none can tell the truth more bravely or with greater nicety than you," Katrine broke in.

"When I've need of it, and it's an affair of men," he answered. "Oh, I still know Truth when I meet her. We've not fallen out altogether, but I stick to it that she's very dry company. But this discussion, after all, is merely academic," he said, with a droll smile. "I have come to you in a perturbed state of mind. You have refused to marry me thousands of times, it is true; but I am noble, and forgive. To-morrow I am having some delicacies sent me from the North. My cook is a duffer. Now, I thought, why can't Katrine Dulany and I have a little dinner, with Nora to prepare it, Mr. Ravenel asked in, and all be happy together?"

"I don't think Mr. Ravenel can come. There are visitors at Ravenel House," Katrine explained.

"He can—and I think he will—leave them for one evening," Dermott answered.

"I'm the only human being alive that ye've not hypnotized, Frank Ravenel!" Dermott cried, with a laugh, as the three of them sat at dinner at the Old Lodge the evening following this talk. "The only person ye've ever known, probably, who did not fall under the charm of the ways and the eyes of you." There was flattery in this of such a subtle kind that Katrine looked quickly

from one to the other, for with woman's intuition she had long since felt the antagonism between them.

"Ye see," Dermott went on, "I underrated the South when I came here. You Southerners understand people as I think no other folk on earth understand them. That's your great strength," he said, addressing himself entirely to Frank. "Now, in a business matter I might, though I'm by no means sure of it, get the better of you." His eyes were bland and frank as he spoke. "But where you would always have the advantage is in knowing the people you may trust. It's a great gift that. The greatest knowledge of all is to know people, and it seems to be an instinct with you, Mr. Ravenel!"

Again Katrine looked from one to the other, mystified, as Francis sat smiling under this flattery.

"Shouldn't there be accompanying laurel wreaths with this unsolicited testimonial, Mr. McDermott?" he inquired, with a laugh.

In a second Dermott took warning, left the subject, and was galloping over conversational fields furthest from compliments to Frank.

"About the trouble over your Senator here from North Carolina. I'd a talk with the Presi-

dent concerning him, and it was mentioned, though hiddenly, that the White House does not want him returned."

And later—

"The pork bill! Heavens! I saw McClenahan in the Senate about it, and I said to him: 'If ye stand for the pork bill, ye'll not be returned to the Senate next year. I'll see to it myself. I know your district. God! How I know it! You can buy every vote in that part of the land of the free and home of the brave for ten dollars, or less —and I've the money to do it.' He didn't vote for it." McDermott finished with a jolly laugh.

Again and again during the dinner he discussed his private affairs in this manner, deferring to Ravenel, flattering him by asking opinions on weighty subjects, listening to the answers with gloomy attentiveness, bewildering, fascinating, dominating, by a perfectly conscious use of every power he possessed.

At the mention of a coaching party which had passed Katrine's house the day before, with Frank driving four-in-hand, he added a note of gayety to the dinner, returning at the same time to the game he was playing with Frank.

"I never see ye drive, Ravenel," he cried, "but I think of the olden days. Ye've a style all your

own when you hold the lines. Wait a minute! Wait a minute! I'm seized with rhyme." He stood silent, his eyes drawn together at the corners, his gaze concentrated, glass in hand, before he began with a hypnotic look and great lightness of bearing to recite, waiting every little while for the right word to come to him:

"When Ravenel drives four-in-hand,
There's something in his style and way
That takes us to a by-gone day
Of statelier times and manners grand:
When ladies gay,
In bright array,
And patch and powder held their sway."

"I rather fancy that last!" he cried, repeating it:

"When ladies gay,
In bright array,
And patch and powder held their sway.

"When Ravenel drives four-in-hand,
The days of chivalry return,
Hearts with an old-time passion burn,
And lords and ladies fill the Strand,
Our thoughts in that old time abide

When Raleigh lived
And Rizzio died,
And fair Queen Mary sinned and sighed—
That olden land,
That golden land,
When Ravenel drives four-in-hand.

"To you, Mr. Ravenel!" he cried, draining his glass.

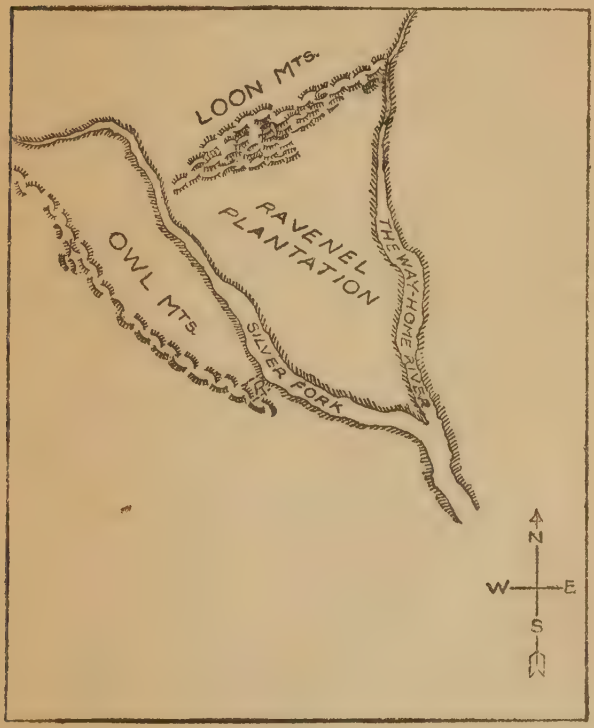
"Thank you, McDermott," Francis answered, with a pleased smile, "you have, indeed, the gift of rhyme." And Katrine knew as Frank spoke that his distrust of Dermott had been laid aside for the present, and that he was in a state of mind to grant anything which Dermott might demand of him.

The thought troubled her after she had left them together for the coffee and cigars. She had believed for a long time, as she had told Frank in the rose-garden, that Dermott was in Carolina on some business connected with Ravenel, and she had an instinct that the affair was to be brought to a head to-night.

From her place in the hall she could see that Dermott had brought his chair around to Frank's side at the table, and she heard him say:

"You know—or probably, with your celestial

indifference to business affairs, Ravenel, you don't know that there is a small piece of land on the other side of the Silver Fork which belongs to your estate. In looking up some old titles I discovered it. It's like this." He drew a note-book from his pocket, drawing as he



talked. "Here's Loon Mountain. Here's the Silver Fork. Here's the Way-Home River. Ye've the right, I discover, to the land marked R. It's, as you know, of small value to you, and I'm wanting it. It's a vagary of mine. I may be going to raise eagles on it."

At the words, Katrine, who had been retuning an old guitar, took alarm and was alert on the instant. Striking it quickly, insistently, she came to the door of the dining-room, which framed her beauty like a picture.

"I'm going to sing you an Irish song, a real Irish song!" she cried, gayly, touching the strings.

The men turned, and Francis, with the land on the other side of the Silver Fork clear out of his mind at sight of her, came near the doorway where she stood.

"Come all ye men and fair maids
And listen to my song,
I'll sing of Bloomin' Caroline,
Who never did a wrong.

SHE

Beats the fragrant roses,
She's admired by all aroun'.
They call her Bloomin' Caroline,
Of Edinboro Town."

She played an interlude carelessly.

"Young Henry, being a Highland lad,
A-courting her he came,
And when her parents heard of it
They did not like the same.

SO

She bundled up her costly robes,
The stairs came tripping down,
And away went Bloomin' Caroline
From Edinboro Town."

Dermott had risen and stood by the far window, looking into the night. Unseen by him, she touched Frank on the sleeve.

"Do not do anything he asks you to do tonight," she whispered, with great intensity, and in a minute more was back at the singing.

"They had not been in London
For scarcely half a year—"

and before the song ended the two men were joining the refrain, taken out of themselves by her beauty and charm.

For nearly a week after this she saw neither of them again, but her honest soul was fretted

by the word she had given against a true friend; so, when she saw Dermott riding along the river-bank, she called to him from the rocks upon which she sat.

"Dermott McDermott," she cried, "come here!"

He rode through the ferns and undergrowth toward her, as she stood looking up at him with fearless eyes.

"I've done something I want to tell you, something you won't like, for it was going against you; and it makes me feel that I've not been quite loyal to you, you that's always been so good to me, too." The quick tears filled her eyes as she spoke.

He dismounted to be nearer her, and, putting out his hand, said:

"There's nothing you could do that's not forgiven. You hold my heart in the hollow of your hand. What did ye do, child?"

"The other night when I saw you turning Mr. Ravenel the way you wanted by your flattery and your hypnotic presence, I knew ye wished him to do something for you. I knew when you told him how clever he was—*cleverer than you were yourself*—that it must be something very great to make you admit a thing like that. And when

you were not near I warned him against selling you that land. I said: 'Don't do anything Dermott McDermott wants you to do to-night.'" Here she broke into a storm of weeping. "You see, he's been so kind to me," she explained.

Dermott stood looking at her with pity and admiration as he put his hand gently on her shoulder.

"Ye did just what was right, little lady; just the thing that any sweet, grateful woman should have done. You understood what I was doing, thought a friend might be cajoled wrongly, and warned him against it. I'm proud of ye for it!" he cried, with enthusiasm. "Proud of you!" he repeated. "And besides," he added, with a laugh, "it didn't make the slightest difference. He did it anyhow! We signed the papers to-day!"

"The papers for what?" she demanded.

"For that useless bit of land on the other side of the fork," he responded.

"Dermott," she said, "you play fair, don't you? You wouldn't take advantage of any one?"

"Wouldn't I?" he said. "If it were to help you, I'd outwit the deil himself, Lady Katrine."

VII

KATRINE'S OWN COUNTRY

IN the following fortnight Francis and Katrine met but three times.

One day, having grown restless, she went to walk, taking the road from the plantation back into the mountains. Returning by the ford, she heard laughter and the ring of horses' hoofs, and by a sudden turn of the road came directly upon Frank, who, separated from a party, was riding beside Anne Lennox. At first sight of her whom she knew instinctively to be a rival, Katrine was reminded of a golden peony, for the pale-yellow hair, bright hazel eyes shot with yellow light, and thick, creamy skin had given Anne Lennox from early childhood a noticeable and flower-like beauty. A long-limbed, slender, full-breasted, laughing woman, with square shoulders and the carriage of one much accustomed to the saddle, she looked with curiosity at Katrine, who was standing aside beneath the elderberry-bushes to permit them to pass.

"As I was saying," Anne had just remarked, "when you act as you have done since I have been here, Frank, it's always a woman. At Biarritz, you remember, it was Mrs. Vaughn. That beast of a spring at Marno, it was Mrs. McIntire. You might as well tell me who it is. You will in the end."

"Upon my honor, Anne—" Frank began, with a laugh, when he met the clear eyes of Katrine looking at him from below.

If there had been some coldness, some resentment at his lack of attention to her, or implied jealousy at his devotion to another, he could have understood it. But there was nothing of the kind. In those eyes, which he believed the most beautiful in the world, there was nothing but a glad light at seeing him, a bright smile of recognition in which he could detect neither remembrance nor regret.

Anne Lennox turned her keen brown eyes backward to look at Katrine as she crossed the bridge. "Frank Ravenel," she exclaimed, "if a girl who looks like that lives near you, you have been making love to her! I wonder if by any chance she could be *the* woman!"

"She is the daughter of the new overseer," Frank answered; and his tone implied, though

the words were not spoken: "and by this reason out of the class." The statement was made with misleading frankness, and Anne Lennox, understanding his pride, put the affair from her mind.

The next time of meeting between Francis and Katrine was one morning on the river road. Her cheeks flushed at sight of him, and there was an odd reserve in her manner; but she never seemed more beautiful.

He stood, hat in hand, wondering at her silence, a bit amused.

"It is a pleasant day," he suggested, at length, remotely.

"It *is* pleasant," she answered, with averted eyes.

"Unusual weather for this season, don't you think?" he went on, a bit of teasing in his tone.

"I haven't thought of it," she said, concisely.

"Suppose you think about it now," he suggested, jesting still, but not quite at ease concerning her mood.

Suddenly she turned toward him, her face suffused, her eyes troubled.

"Katrine," he cried, "what is the matter? Tell me! Let me help you!"

"I'm jealous," she said, simply.

"Jealous!" he repeated. "Of whom?"

"You."

She had clasped her hands in front of her, and stood with her chin drawn in, looking at him from under a tangle of dusky hair.

"You poor child," he said, moving toward her.

"Don't!" she cried, backing away, "don't try to comfort me! I've always, *always* been like this. I cannot help it. Whenever I care for anybody—oh, it never made any difference whether I had any right to care or to be jealous! I just was; and it hurts!" She put her hands suddenly over her heart and began to speak rapidly, as a child does when accumulated trouble makes silence no longer possible. "I hated her when I saw she was with you; far up the road, when I only knew she was a woman; and when I saw her nearer I hated her more. She is so pretty," she explained. "Are you going to marry her?" she demanded.

"Not exactly," he answered, grimly.

"Good-bye!" she cried, dropping down the river-bank to the skiff.

"Katrine!" he called.

"I'm not coming back!" she cried through the bushes. "I'm never coming back! Good-bye!"

Two days later there came from Ravenel House a polite note, cordial by the book, asking

that Miss Dulany come to them for dinner on the fifth; and, it added, perhaps Miss Dulany might give them an opportunity to hear her charming voice. It was written in the quaint, old-fashioned hand of Mrs. Ravenel.

Katrine read it with a curious smile around her lips, answering while the messenger waited. She "regretted extremely that a cold"; she paused a minute in the writing to reflect on the way the cold had come; sitting one damp afternoon in the rose-garden with the son of the writer of this extremely polite invitation; "regretted extremely that this cold, which seemed more persistent than such things generally were, prevented her accepting Mrs. Ravenel's most kind invitation."

The third meeting was an intentional one on Frank's part. The people at Ravenel had become unbearable, and with no thought save for Katrine's society, he took a short cut through the laurel trees, crossed the river in his canoe, and entered the lodge garden to find her sitting on the broad steps of the house, her chin resting in her hands. There was an exaltation in her little being, an alluring remoteness, an entire concentration upon her own thoughts, which one sees in a child; and when one saw her thus,

dreaming hillward, one knew there were great ongoings in that dusky head of hers.

At sight of him she bowed gravely, moving that he might have nearly all the rug upon which she had been sitting, not minding the stones for herself in the least. Her careless generosity spoke even in this trifling act.

"You are bored?" she asked, after a silence which he seemed disinclined to break.

"To extinction, little lady," he answered, puffing a cloud of smoke into the hollyhocks. "You see, you have spoiled me for those others." There was another pause. "And you?" he asked.

"I? Well, I practised, and planted some flowers, and made some things for Miranda's baby, and then"—she hesitated, with an adorably shy look full of that pathos, which made so many of her simplest statements seem claims for protection, "and then I went over into 'My Own Land.'"

He regarded her for a minute, his approval of her showing in every line of his handsome face. It was in these untouchable moods of her, when she eluded him utterly, when she took him out of himself entirely, that he found the most zest in intercourse with her.

"Is it a long journey to that land of yours?"

he demanded, gravely, "making believe" with her.

"Not long," she answered, "but sometimes difficult. I go down to a queer gate; I never knew where I got that gate," she threw in, in an explaining way; "and let down the bars and walk up a long driveway of blue pines, and there I am!"

"Go on," he said, "though I think it shabby that you've never told me of your property before now."

"I found this country; oh, years ago! Of course, I have changed it a great deal. There was only one house at first, like Kenilworth Castle, only much larger, with those heavenly, deep windows. And I have taken all the people I liked to live there—"

"Jolly," he said; adding, hastily: "But not in the least a house-party sort of thing, is it? where they play bridge and drink whiskey-sours?"

Katrine shook her head. "These people *live* in My Country. I've stolen some, but others come of their own accord. They are very great people. Colonel Newcome is the host. You know him?"

"Adsum," Frank answered, softly, and Katrine flashed a smile of appreciation back at him.

"And Henry Esmond," she went on, "I have a time with him. Of course, he never really married that other woman and went to live in Virginia. He adored Beatrice until the end, and is always trying to have her with him. I've had it out with him!" She smiled again, as at a memory, and extended one hand dramatically.

"'Henry Esmond,' I said (you know he's a little man, so I looked straight in his eyes as I spoke), 'I will not have her here with her red stockings and their silver clocks.'

"'Ye've listened to gossip of her,' says he.

"'Twas you yourself that rode after her and the King, when ye crossed swords with his Majesty for her honor,' said I.

"'An event which never took place, believe me,' said he, with a bow, and he bows like a king.

"'Ye lie like a gentleman,' said I, 'and I've pride in ye for it; but Beatrice Esmond never comes in here.' And then I just told the truth to him. 'I've had jealousy of her for many years, despite her morals,' I explained."

Ravenel threw back his head and laughed.

"Oh, you women!" he cried. "Are there many ladies resident in that land of yours?"

"Some; not many. Di Vernon, of course,

and Mary Richling, and Dora, whom David Copperfield never had sense enough to appreciate, and oh, the children! Huckleberry Finn and Little Lord Fauntleroy! The Nigger Jim tends the grounds, you know. And that divine Harold of the Dream Days!

"One awful day," she went on, "when everything seemed wrong," the quick tears came to her eyes as she spoke, "and I was sick and disgraced before people and wanted to die, I went into My Own Land, and there was Jean Valjean at the bars waiting for me. He smiled as I came."

"'Cheer up, Little Irish Lady!' he cried, at sight of me, 'cheer up! There is reason for everything in that Great Beyond that we'll understand some day.' And that night, because of his strength, I went to sleep comforted, and the next morning sang the 'Ah! Patria mia' quite nobly. It was payment for the suffering, perhaps. Who can tell?"

"And whom," it was curious how Frank's jealousy showed in the question, "whom do you like best of all these tenant folk of yours, Katrine?"

"Ye'll never tell?" She turned to look him full in the eyes. "Promise me ye'll never tell;

for if the word of it gets abroad there'll be no keeping him in bounds, he's so filled with conceit of himself already." She leaned toward Frank and whispered: "It's Alan Breck. Ah," she cried, "you feel so fine and sure when ye're out with him! With his glittering sword and his belt of gold, and the way he takes the centre of the stage and the speech skin-fitted to the occasion. It's grand to be with him then. But it's none of these that I love him for. Do you remember when he says to Catriona: '*I'm a kind of henchman to Davie,*' she quoted Alan's words with a deep-voiced enthusiasm, '*and whatever he cares for I've got to care for, too. I'm no' so very bonny, but I'm leal to them I love.*' In My Land, that is all they care for. They are of all religions and times and climes, but they are loyal, every one." And, turning to him suddenly, she brought her wee bit of a fist down on the hard stone, her cheeks flushed, her eyes glorious to see. "It's all there is, in My Land or yours, that makes life worth while—*Loyalty!* The 'enduring to the end.' *Even if one's none so bonny, he can be leal to them he loves!*"

Frank threw his cigar away and moved nearer to her, holding out his hand with an odd com-

bination of "make-believe" and real pleading in his voice.

"Katrine, dear," he said, "take me to live in that land of yours. I want to let down the bars of the gate you don't know where you found, and go up the pine driveway to meet Colonel Newcome. I want all that it means to have those people for intimate friends."

"One must make one's own 'Land,'" Katrine answered. "And besides," with a curious, lovable puckering of her eyelids, "men mustn't *dream* things. Men must *do*."

There was a silence.

"Must they?" he asked, at length. "Why?"

"Did it ever occur to you," she asked, abruptly, "that you might work—ever, I mean—when you were a boy?"

"Never for a second."

"You never felt that you would like to take a part in great affairs, as other men do?"

"Why should I, Katrine? I have all the money I can possibly want. Life is short. I come of a family who tire of living quickly. Say, for instance, I live until I'm sixty. I probably sha'n't, you know, but we'll say so for argument. One-third of the time I sleep, which reduces the real living to forty years. Until the

time of fifteen one doesn't count, anyway. That gives me but twenty-five years of life. Now, I ask you"—he threw back his head as he spoke, his face charming with a humorous smile, an illuminated eye—"now, I ask you, if you would be so hard-hearted as to desire me—with but twenty-five years at my disposal, remember—to spend them in a treadmill of work when I might be spending them under the pines and the beeches with you, Katrine—*with you!*"

She had clasped her knees, making of herself a magnetic bunch of color and lovableness, and she let her eyes rest in his a moment before she spoke. "Don't talk that way, will you? I like to think of you always as a great man—a man of action, a man who helps."

They regarded each other steadily for a full minute before he said:

"It has begun."

"What?" she asked, mystified.

"That mental treatment you spoke of some time ago. You are having a terrible effect on me, Katrine, and I find it extremely uncomfortable," he added, laughing.

VIII

FRANK YIELDS TO TEMPTATION

DURING the time of the house-party at Ravenel, Katrine gave vent to the natural rebellion against her position but once. Dermott was away on some business in New York; the daily letter from Dr. Johnston concerning her father's condition had not arrived; and she had seen the gay people from Ravenel coach past her as she sat alone on the Chestnut Ridge.

For nearly a week she had been sleeping badly, awakening every hour or two through the night with something—something that could not be put aside—pressing upon her soul.

Huddled in a sad little heap, in her white gown by the side of the bed, one unbearable night she stretched her arms along the coverlet, sobbing out to the everlasting silence the questionings as to what she had done to be so neglected and set apart.

"What has been in my life but shame—shame which was not mine?" she cried, as the horror

of life with her drunken father came back to her. "Why are some given everything," she demanded, "and I nothing? Where is God's justice? What have I done; oh, what have I done?"

Out in the wooded silence a bird began to sing a mournful melody. Of the greatness of night he sang, and dead morns, and dropping stars; of dear forgotten things and loves that might have been, that may not be; of passion and unfulfilled desires, and through the pines the song entered her heart like a response. She listened, not as a girl listening to a bird, but as one artist listens to another with a rapture of appreciation. And the music comforted her. And later, in the midst of great sorrow, she saw intended significance in the occurrence.

"It was an answer," she said, "to remind me that there will always be that solace. Give me, oh God," she prayed, "power to make of all my sorrow music for the world!"

The day following her midnight protest she heard from Nora and old Cæsar that the guests at Ravenel had gone; heard as well that "old Miss and Marse Frank were goin' shortly"; heard it with a stirring at her heart of physical pain to which she had grown used.

On the evening of this day, a warm June even-

ing, she expected him to come, and dressed as though there were an engagement between them to spend the evening together. In a thin white gown, low in the neck, with a kerchief of filmy lace knotted in front, sleeves that fell away at the elbow, with faint, pink roses at her breast, her black hair turned high in a curly knot, she stood in the old rose-garden when he came.

He wore a light overcoat over his evening dress, and stood hatless by the boxwood arch looking across at her.

"Katrine," he said, "little Katrine, I have come back to you."

His face was illumined as he spoke her name. The peculiar ability to express more than he felt was always his, but at the instant he felt more than he was able to express.

"I am glad," she answered, not moving toward him nor offering to shake hands. It seemed enough that he was there.

"They have gone at last," he said; adding, piously: "Thank God!"

"You did not have a good time?" she asked.

"I did not."

"I am sorry," she said, baffling him by the serenity of her tone.

"There were two or three occasions which

stand out with a peculiarly horrible distinctness. One was the time we had an all-day picnic at Bears' Den. Porter Brawley suggested it, and I hope he will suffer for it in eternity. It rained."

Katrine laughed.

"And there was an evening when we had charades, for which nobody had the least gift or training. It was the evening you were to come to us. Why didn't you, Katrine?"

"I was not well," she answered. "But I shouldn't have come if I'd been well, Mr. Ravenel."

She seemed to him so perfect, such an utterly desirable being, as she sat with roses in her hand and the moonlight shining on her flower-like face.

Neither noted the silence which fell between them, a silence which spoke more than language could have done, for language had become, between them, an unnecessary thing.

There was still no spoken word as they walked side by side along the path which led to the house. At the turn into the wider way there was a tall pine-tree, the boughs beginning high from the ground, the turf beneath them covered with brown pine-needles. There was a bench here, upon which they had often sat together. In the moonlight this place under the tree was in a soft,

warm glow. As they drew near it Frank spoke in a voice scarcely above a whisper. "Sit here, just for a minute?"

It seemed as though they were alone together in the world. In the moonlit gloom under the pine they stood, near, nearer, and at length he put his arm around her gently, not drawing her toward him, only letting it lie around her waist, as though they had a right to be there, heart to heart, in the stillness of the night. Standing thus, he felt her tremble, noted her quickened breath, and the rise and fall of her breast and shoulders because of his caress.

Although they could not see each other in the gloom, she knew his lips sought hers. By an indefinable instinct she turned from him twice before their lips met in a long kiss of passion and content. They kissed each other again before he drew her down beside him on the garden bench in the flower-scented dusk.

"You care?" she asked, in a whisper, her breath on his cheek.

"More than I thought I could care for anything in life," he answered.

It was after ten when Nora's shrill voice recalled them to themselves.

Standing together, she asked, as she bade him good-night: "You—are—going—away?"

For answer he clasped her slim white hands behind his throat and drew her toward him.

"What do you think?" he said, his lips kissing hers in the speaking of the words.

"I hope you will not go."

"I shall not." And then: "Oh, for a few days, perhaps, to take mother to Bar Harbor; but I shall come back. And we'll have the whole long summer together, you and I; you and I," he repeated. "Good-night. Kiss me, Katrine!"

"Good-night," she said, raising her lips to his; and then, almost as though it were a benediction, she added: "God keep you always just as you are, beloved." And as he had done many times before, Francis Ravenel felt powerless before this girl who gave all, asking nothing in return.

IX

THE TRUTH

FRANK did not leave Ravenel even for the few days which he had mentioned to Katrine as a possibility. Accompanied only by her maid, Mrs. Ravenel started to Bar Harbor without him. June drifted into July, and still he lingered at the plantation.

And all the summer days were spent with Katrine Dulany. At first he believed that he would probably tire of the whole affair quickly. He was surprised to find that he did not. He found her always new. There was an elusive quality to her, days when she would barely permit him to touch her hand, when she dazzled him by the audacity of her thinking; her indifference to him, to him who was in no way accustomed to indifference in women. And a few hours later, perchance, he would return to find a girl with wistful eyes and speech of tenderness, with no thought "that is not for the king," she told him once.

No word of marriage was spoken between them; if Katrine thought such an event possible, she gave no sign, spoke no word concerning it. If he came early, she welcomed him with shining eyes; if he were late, this incomprehensible person bestowed upon him exactly the same smile and glance she would have given had he come two hours before.

"I have kept you waiting for me, I am afraid," he said one day, when he had kept an engagement he had made for ten o'clock at a quarter of twelve.

That morning she had been studying; not tones, but German Church music, and already she had realized, unformulatedly, the solace in the exercise of a great gift; had found that she could forget trouble in the world of inspired work; not for long, perhaps, but long enough to have peace of mind restored to her and strength to go on for another day.

"It didn't matter," she said. "I practised. One forgets one is waiting then."

Finally there arose in him an absurd jealousy of this gift of hers, of the thing which seemed to console her even for his absence.

"I shall learn to hate your music," he said one night, when she had drawn herself away from

him to listen intently to the song of a nightingale in the pines.

"Don't do that!" she said. "Ah, don't do that! Don't you see that it is all I have for my own in life; all I shall ever have!"

And with some hidden, mental connection between his words and the act, she began to sing in her great, lovely voice:

"Ask nothing more of me, sweet,
All I can give you I give.
Heart of my heart, were it more,
More shall be laid at your feet.
Love that should help thee to live,
Song that should bid thee to soar.
All I can give you I give;
Ask nothing more, nothing more."

She asked, neither by word nor look, for any expression concerning the song; but as the last note died away seated herself beside him, chin in hand, looking far past him into the night.

At two of the next morning he awakened with a start. He was alone in his own rooms at Ravenel. Looking around in the half-light of the window, he put his head back on the pillow with the air of one awakened from a feverish

dream. But sleep had vanished for the night. Conscience was with him. The time had come for the reckoning; some settlement with himself was required.

Where was he going, and where was he taking Katrine Dulany? Marriage was out of the question. A person of his importance did not make a mesalliance. He owed a duty to all the Ravenels who had preceded him, to those who would follow. To marry suitably was the first duty in life; perhaps it was the only one which he acknowledged. *Where was he going?* He lay with open eyes, staring at the ceiling in the faint light of the coming dawn, with a sense of physical sickness at the thought of giving Katrine up, of letting her go out of his life forever. He had told her he cared more for her than he had ever thought it possible for him to care for any one. That was long since, back in the times before he had known the sweetness of her. Now, with all the heart he had to give, he had learned to love her, to long for her presence; she had touched a new chord in his nature, one which he had never known before her coming.

He would not give her up; he could not. Why should he? She would be happier with him, even though wrongfully his, than with a drunken

father in the forests of North Carolina. They would go to Paris together. It would be years before he would care to marry. But at the thought Katrine's eyes came back to him. *Francis the King!* It was so she spoke of him, and it was this complete trust that appealed to all the best within him, as a tenderness born of her sweetness, her complete loyalty, raised him beyond his own selfishness, and he resolved to save her, save her even from himself.

With this fixed thought he rose early and, breakfastless, went out into the dawn. He would go away and leave her. He would see her once more and tell her the truth about himself. He would make it clear to her, "damnably clear," he said to himself, with a set chin. She would be left with no illusions concerning him. It would help her to forget to know him as he really was. He felt it part of his expiation to tell her the truth.

As he rode up the pathway to the lodge he was white to the lips. His eyes were sunken. All the passion of which he was capable longed for this woman whom he was about to surrender, perhaps to some other. He winced at the thought of it.

She was sitting in the old arbor and turned

suddenly at the sound of his steps, an unopened book dropping from her hands at sight of him.

"What is the matter?" she asked, anxiously, at sight of his white face. "Are you ill?"

"Katrine!" he cried, "it is shame—shame at what I have been doing; shame at the way I have been treating you!"

She grew suddenly pale, and her lips parted as she stood with eyes fastened upon him, waiting for him to go on.

"I wanted you to love me," he went on. "I wanted it from the first. As time passed I learned to care so much that I thought of nothing else, wanted nothing else, but to be near you. But never, never for one instant, and, Katrine, it is of this you must think always, *never for one instant did I intend to marry you!*"

She placed one hand against the bench for support, her face exquisitely pale, her eyes darkened, her mouth drawn; but she regarded him steadily and bravely as he continued.

"I might make excuses for my conduct; might even lie about there being some obstacles, my mother's objections, the rest of the family, but I don't want to do that. I want you to know the truth just as it stands, to know me exactly as I am. My mother would object to my marry-

ing you, but if I did it she would in time become reconciled. I have my way with her. The only thing that stands between us is my pride, family pride. It is sending me away from you. I am going to-day, going to-day, because I do not dare to stay."

Still she spoke no word, but sat looking away from him into the ocean of roses.

"For God's sake, say something to me, Katrine!" he cried, at length. "Tell me even that I am the contemptible cad you think me to be; only say something. I cannot endure this. With every fibre of me I am longing to take you in my arms, to kiss your eyes that have the ache in them. God knows how I want you and how I am suffering!"

Her lips quivered for an instant before she controlled herself to speak.

"There seems nothing to say except 'Goodbye.'"

Her voice was infinitely sad and tender. There was neither anger nor resentment in it, and she rose as though to leave him, but he held her back. The great womanliness of her, the ability to suffer in silence, and the dignity of such a silence touched him strangely. There was a sob in his throat as he spoke.

"Forgive me!" he said. "Oh, say you forgive me, Katrine!"

"Dear," she answered—and as she spoke she put her hand on his brown hair, as a mother might have done, "I don't want you to suffer like this. I might have known, had I thought about it at all, that you would never marry me. But it seemed so perfect as it was, I never thought at all, I just," it seemed as though she were saying her worst to him, "I just trusted you."

He flung out one arm as though to protect himself from a physical blow, and a moan escaped him.

"Let me tell you about myself," she continued; "it will be best, for we may never meet again. Oh, please God," she cried, suddenly, "we may never meet again in this world!"

The tears were rolling down her cheeks, and she sobbed aloud as she spoke. He reached his arms toward her, but she moved away, sitting silent until she regained such composure as would permit her to go on.

"The first thing I remember in my life, I must have been about three, was my father's beating his head against the wall of the room in which I was sleeping because my mother had left him. After that I became used to anything—

to sudden moves in the dark; to being alone with him through the long nights when he had been drinking; to poverty, to black poverty that means not enough to eat nor enough clothes to keep one warm; to years and years of want and despair and misery. As I grew older and went to the convent schools, some of the girls invited me home with them. It was because of my looks and my voice, you know." There was sweet humility in the statement, as though apologizing for the fact that she had been desired. "And they were quite kind. Their parents liked me, and one of them, I remember, said: 'She has a beautiful manner, which is wonderful considering she is little better than a child of the streets.' I could not feel even then how I was to blame for my birth, seeing that it was a thing arranged for me by the good God. But I learned what to expect.

"As father grew worse and less able to care for himself, it was necessary to have money. Mr. Ravenel, I have been a beggar in the streets! I have sung in the streets, I! in the court-yards of the hotels, for money to keep from starving! So you will see sorrow is no new thing to me. I do not question it. I have had in my life three perfectly happy months, perfectly happy. It is

as much as a woman can expect, perhaps, and though it kill me, though it kill me, I shall never regret having known and loved you." She paused a minute. "When one has to die it is best to go quickly, is it not? When there is some terrible thing in life to do, it were best done quickly as well. Good-bye," she said, putting out her hand.

He shook his head. "If I touch you I shall not go. Oh, Katrine, Katrine, Katrine! Do you know what I am doing? I am going when I could stay, stay, or take you with me! Will you remember it in the years to come, when you are older and will understand what it means? Will you, oh, for God's sake, Katrine, remember that there was still some little good in me, that although I did not do the best I could have done for you, at least I kept myself from doing the worst?"

A scarlet flush suffused her face at his words.

"Ah, don't!" she cried, putting out her hand, as though to ward off a blow. "Don't! Don't say it! Don't even think it! Believe me, it could never have been like that! I should have died first!"

X

TO TRY TO UNDERSTAND

SHE turned and left him, walking quietly along the narrow path through the harrowed field under the silent pines. The feeling of death was upon her. She wanted to cover her eyes, to blot out the sun, to run to some friendly darkness to make her moan. She knew he was watching her, however, and carried her head well up. She hoped that he could not see that her hands were clinched. As she went on, her cheeks scarlet, her carriage splendidly undejected, the wish came to her that she could sing. It would prove to him that she had the will not to let this thing crush her, not to be as other women might have been. But her sincere soul put the thought aside because of its untruth. She had given him a great honesty always, she would give it to him until the end. He knew she suffered, but she desired him to know as well that she was brave, that her spirit was unconquered, that she would

do something rather than weakly suffer in ineffectual rebellion.

On the crest of the hill she turned to look at him. He was standing with his eyes fastened on her, the strained whiteness of his face marked out against the black of his horse's mane.

Across the distance she had covered their eyes met. The slim little figure in the black frock outlined against the blue of the sky, the wind blowing the pines over her head, her dusky hair holding the sun, her skirts, pushed backward by the wind, revealing her childish body full of exquisite vitality. The tears stood big in her eyes, but hers was a soldier's courage, the courage to face defeat, a thing goodly to see in man or woman. Hastily she untied the scarlet kerchief she wore around her throat and waved it to him, high, at arm's-length, like a flag of victory.

"Ah, don't worry! It's all right!" she called. "Don't think about me! Good-bye!"

At the back of the lodge, down by the brook, there was a place shut in by bushes and roofed over by boughs,where she had often before hidden her grief. Reaching this leafy room, she threw herself on the pine-needles, moving her head from side to side as if in physical pain. There was shame mixed with the grief. Remembered

endearments came back to her; his head had lain on her bosom one night when she had tried to ease his pain by her small, cool hands. The place burned over her heart, and she pressed her hand to her side as though to stanch a wound.

If there had been another reason for his conduct, she thought, any reason save the one he gave! If a father had forbidden marriage between them, or if he had feared the anger of his mother, her pride, at least, would not have suffered. But he had made it clear, "damnably clear," as he has stated it, that the only obstacle to his marrying her was his own will.

But he had suffered, too. She had seen him white and haggard with longing for her, and she knew pretence too well to doubt that thus far she was the supreme attraction in his life. The thing that hung black over all was the unchangeableness of the cause of her trouble. She could never be anything but Katrine Dulany; he had decided that she was not worthy to become Katrine Ravenel. Wherein, then, did these Ravenels excel? Her rebellious Irish heart put questions for her clear head to answer. Were they a generous, high-minded, clear-souled people? Folk-tales, passed by word of mouth, of the ill doings of Francis sixth, as well as Francis

fifth of the name, told her they were not. Certain dusky faces with the Ravenel mouth and chin had spoken to her of a moral code before which her clean soul stood abashed. Were they more intelligent, more dignified, more refined? The narrow-mindedness of them answered these questionings in the negative. Were they; and here that self-belief, which seems placed like a shell to protect all genius, entered its own, demanding; were they of the specially gifted, as she knew herself to be?

But through the turmoil of heated thought one idea became fixed, however. She must leave Carolina and work; determinedly, doggedly; work to save her reason. Unformulated plans were taking shape in her mind even while she sobbed forth her grief. If she could but study, she thought!

"There must"—and here she spoke aloud, her hands clinched in the pine-needles—"must, *must* be found some way to do it!"

And by some curious mental twist, as she made the resolution, there came back to her the words of some old reading:

"*No great artistic success ever came to any woman, that had not its root in a dead love.*"

As she lay face downward, her body con-

vulsed with weeping, it was ordered that Dermott McDermott should take a short cut through that part of the grounds to the boat-landing, on one of his lightning-like trips to foreign parts. He had just encountered Frank riding like the wind, his face haggard and drawn, and at the sight of Katrine's distress he drew conclusions, with rage and a dancing madness in his eye.

"If ye've hurt her, Frank Ravenel, if I find when I come back ye've hurt her, you'll answer to me for it! God! *how* you will answer to me!" he cried.

There is this about life: that frequently when we think the worst has happened it is but the forerunner of worse to come.

As Katrine lay tossed by misery and shame, Nora O'Grady, with her kilted linsey-woolsey skirt turned up, her white kerchief loosened over her bosom, and her brogans twinkling in her haste, came running along the road, her face twitching with sorrow. Ever and anon in her speed she dried her eyes on her apron and a moan escaped her.

"Poor heart!" she repeated. "Poor heart, she's enough to bear without this coming to her the now!"

But pushing the branches aside, she spoke in simulated anger to Katrine, a pretence which showed well the peculiar delicacy of her class. It was not for the like of her, she reasoned, to know the truth regarding Miss Katrine's relation with Mr. Ravenel; and yet she knew as accurately as if the scene of the morning had taken place before her. With clear, wise eyes she had dreaded such an ending the summer long. Nothing, she reasoned, could further hurt Katrine's pride than to have it known her love had been slighted, or to offer sympathy, no matter how hiddenly. And so she feigned well an anger she was far from feeling, in an intentional misunderstanding.

Looking down at the prostrate figure, she began, in a shrill voice:

"Honestly to God, Miss Katrine, ye'll hear another word of this! Crying like a child in the middle of a lot of damp stickers because ye can't have music as ye like! Just throw yourself round on this wet ground a bit more an' mayhap He'll take away the voice He's given ye already! Perhaps it's because ye cry for nothing that there's been something sent ye to cry for!" And here her thought of suitable conduct was lost in real grief.

"Ah, Miss Katrine! Miss Katrine! Your fa-

ther," her voice broke and went up in a wail, "your father's come home to ye—"

Katrine, who had arisen, stood with tear-stained face regarding her. "He is—?" She could not go on with the question, but Nora answered it without its being finished.

"He has not been drinking. Oh, Miss Katrine, he's past that! Can't ye understand? The hand of God's upon him! He's called away, Miss Katrine. Ye should have seen him as he crawled to the doorway and fell on it. I got him to his own seat by the window, and he's wanting you, Miss Katrine, he's wanting you sore! So I come, in part to tell you, but more to have ye prepare yerself for the change in him, for his end's in sight!"

Although she was trembling from head to foot and had grown ashen pale, Katrine spoke calmly.

"He came alone?"

Nora shook her head in the affirmative.

"It seems, Miss Katrine, that there was some organic trouble; that the great specialist, whose name is gone from me, warned him not to try the cure. He said the other disease was too far along. But your father wanted to be himself again. It was for you he wanted it. It was the disgrace he was to you that was on his mind always."

"Ah!" she cried, "there was still enough of the old pride in him for that! We must pretend not to understand that he is ill, we must try just to seem glad that he is back home with us again."

When Katrine entered the room where her father sat, she found him, as Nora had said, by the window, his head thrown back, his eyes closed; nor did he open them at her coming, though by a poor movement of the hands he made her understand his knowledge of her presence.

"Little Katrine," he said, while two great tears welled from under the closed lids. "Little Bother-the-House! I have come back to you. There is no one can help me except you."

Katrine made a swift movement to be near him. Kneeling, she drew his poor, sorrowing head to her breast, and in the twilight these two, the one so old and weak and loving, the other so young and desolate and brave, clung to each other, blinded by the vision of the separation so soon to be.

In nearly every crisis of life there comes some twist in affairs which seems to turn the screws harder or sets them to making one flinch in a new and unexpected place. In Katrine's case it was a turn which made life so unbearable that there were times when she would be forced to bite

her lips and set her teeth to keep back a moan, while for hours at a time Patrick Dulany iterated and reiterated the kindness, the thoughtfulness, the goodness to him of Francis Ravenel.

"There was never a day, Katrine, while I was at the hospital, that I had not a letter from him. Money was spent for me like water. The doctor told me he had orders to spare nothing. Ay, there's not another man in the world who would do for a stranger what Mr. Ravenel tried to do for me. And sometimes he'd write drolly, you know his way, that he'd seen ye somewhere, riding, mayhap, or in the garden, or had heard a note of your music as he rode by; and the home feeling would come back to me, and I'd take heart again."

XI

KATRINE IS LEFT ALONE

IN the ten days before her father's death nothing seemed spared Katrine. The hopeless life of the man was recounted to her hour by hour, interspersed with the rereadings of Frank's letters, and, most of all, with remorse at the desolate place he had prepared for her when he had gone.

"But ye'll have a friend in Mr. Ravenel," he told her, earnestly. "One who will help you, Katrine, and ye need have no fear to take his help. He is one who has a high thought for women and would never betray a trust. It's a great comfort to me to know ye've him, Katrine."

On the day before the end his grief was bitter to hear.

"My little wee lassie," he sobbed, "I'm leaving ye alone with nothing; none to shield you, none to care, but just one friend. I'm going out, and it's good I'm going. I would always have held you back, always have been a drag to your name

—for ye'll make a name! It's in you, as it was in her." He stopped speaking, but after a little space began, with a crooning, the glorious "Ah, Patria Mia," and it seemed to Katrine as though her heart would stop beating in her sorrow, for she knew it was her unknown mother of whom he thought.

"Ah," he whispered, at length, wiping his brow, "the music's gone from me. In the whole matter with your mother, Katrine, I was at fault. I was jealous of her gift, of the love she had for it, and made her life miserable by my demandings." He placed his hand tenderly on her head as he spoke. "Katrine," he said, solemnly, "with those we love it's never enough to forgive and forget. One must forgive and try to *understand*. To forget and forgive. Ah, Katrine, time helps us there! It does almost all of the work, so it's little credit we need take either for the forgiving or forgetting. But to try to understand! When those we love have hurt us or injured us, to study why it was done: what inherited weakness in them, what fault of their environment brought it about, to study to understand, that's the real Christianity."

In the starry watches of the night, wide-eyed and grief-shaken, Katrine took the lesson to

heart both for father and lover; learned it with heart and head as well; saw the disarming of criticism, the tolerance, the selflessness which it would bring, and knew that it was good.

But, she demanded of herself, was she large-souled enough to acquire such tolerance toward Francis Ravenel? Leaning on the window-ledge, looking into the clouded darkness of the night, awaiting the hour to give her father the potion that for a time relieved his pain, she went over tenderly, bit by bit, the summer that had passed, that flower-scented, love-illumined summer for which she felt she was to pay with the happiness of a lifetime.

She lived again her first meeting with Frank under the beeches; the recklessness of her own mood because of her father's drinking; Frank's lonesomeness at his home-coming; the touching of hands on the old log; the sympathy between them from the first, and at the end asked herself, honestly, who was most to blame. She had done wrong to permit him to kiss her the night under the pine-tree, but she would not have foregone the memory of it for all the world had to offer.

On the last day about noon the pain left her father, and toward evening he asked to be helped to his old place by the window, that he might see

the sun go down behind the mountains. "There's a letter of Mr. Ravenel's I'd like you to see, Katrine," he said, motioning her to bring him the carefully treasured bundle of Frank's writings.

After assisting him to find the desired letter, she sat at his feet with a white face and fixed eyes as he read:

"I met Katrine to-day on the river-bank. She was well and beautiful and happy. It makes me want to be a better man every time I see her. I want to help to make her life happy—" The hand which held the letter suddenly dropped lifeless.

"Father!" she cried. And again: "Oh, father, can you leave me like this?" And as the truth came to her that she was alone, Nature was merciful, and she fell unconscious by her father's body, with Frank's letters lying scattered around her on the floor.

After her father's burial there followed the collapse which comes so frequently to those women who have the power to bear great trials in silence.

In the small, white bed, with vines reddening around the window and shining into the room, Katrine lay, day after day, with the pallor of death on her face and a horrible nausea of life,

but with a merciful benumbing of the power to suffer further. For more than a fortnight she lay, worn out with the task of living, with a Heaven-sent indifference to trouble past or to come.

But with the return of strength the problem of daily living was to be solved. The little stock of money which she and Nora had between them was used for the last sad needs of her father, and with Dermott McDermott away she knew no one to whom she could turn.

"Don't you be minding troubles like these, though, Miss Katrine," Nora sympathized. "Niver ye mind a bit! Ye're wanting to go away, and we'll find the money to go. We've some bits of trinkets, an old watch or two, and I'm a good hand at a bargain. And we'll not want to carry the furniture on our backs like turtles, either. I know a woman in Marlton whose heart's been set on the old sideboard for months back. We'll go slow, Miss Katrine, but with your voice we've no great cause for worry, my lamb. Look at the thing with sense, and trust to Nora; she'll manage it all. And in a few weeks we'll be off to New York, that wicked old place that I'm far from denyin' I like fine."

On the day before this departure there fell an event, small in itself, yet so momentous in its out-

come that in the story of Katrine it cannot remain untold.

Sad and wide-eyed, she was sitting in her black frock, huddled close to the big pine-tree at the foot of the garden, when Barney O'Grady, the son of Nora, came out of the beech woods. He had been crying, and at sight of Katrine he threw himself on the grass, breaking into a passion of tears, and clutching at her skirt as a child might have done.

"Barney!" Katrine cried. "Barney, dear, what's your trouble?" and she put a soft hand on the boy's tousled red hair.

"Mother's going to leave me here," he said, "and I want to go. I hate it, hate it, hate it, here all alone! I want to go! I want to go!" he moaned.

"Is it the money?" Katrine asked.

"Yes," the boy answered, "there's not enough for us all. And I'm to stay with Mr. McDermott till I earn enough to come. And I want to go *now*."

"But if you should get in New York, what would you do?" Katrine demanded.

"Newspaper work," was the answer. "I've the gift for it," he explained, with an assured vanity, between his sobs.

She had known such lonesomeness and understood it, yet, with all the willingness in the world to help the boy, she had not one penny which she might call her own. Nora kept everything, and she reasoned if Nora had made up her mind that Barney was to stay in North Carolina the chances were heavy that there he would remain.

But the boy continued to sob appealingly, and Katrine, who had that real intelligence which no sooner sees a desired end than it finds a way to accomplish it, put her sorrow aside for practical thinking.

She reviewed her possessions rapidly, remembering, with a throb of pain, some carved gold beads she had worn when "she found herself," at the age of three. They had always seemed part of her, and, though no one had told her, she knew they had belonged to her dead mother, "who went away." But she felt little hesitation in giving them, if some one were to be helped by the sacrifice.

"Wait, Barney," she cried, "here, where Nora can't see you! I'll be back in a moment! They're just some old beads," she said, apologetically, with a splendid dissimulation, as she gave them to the boy. "But old Mrs. Quinby, at Marlton, tried to buy them of Nora once when

they were being mended. Offer them for sale now. And, Barney," she went on, "if you could reconcile it to your conscience to keep it from your mother that I've given them to you; if you could with no lying, and yet without telling the truth—" She hesitated.

"Ye needn't worry, Miss Katrine," he answered, drying his eyes on his sleeve. "It's been betwixt and between the truth with her all my life. But if the time ever comes when I can serve ye—" He choked. "Ah!" he cried, "words are poor things! But ye'll see!" And with this he was gone at a breakneck run down the Swamp Hollow toward the Marlton road.

And the strangeness is that Katrine's hidden gift of old beads to a half-grown Irish boy, in the woods of North Carolina, should wreck a Metropolitan "first night," shake the money-market of two continents, and change the destinies of many lives.

XII

THE REAL FRANCIS RAVENEL

ON the afternoon of the day upon which Frank said good-bye to Katrine he took the evening train North. It was his intention to see Ravenel no more for a long time, certainly not while the Dulanys remained. He was afraid of himself, for there came to him at every thought of the affair a glow of admiration at the words Katrine had thrown back at him:

"*It could never have been like that. I should have died first.*"

He had given her up, but the fight was not finished, and the struggle went on constantly. In the silences of the night it was upon him again, gripping him with a pain around the heart. The most unexpected happenings would bring remembrances of her. The appealing gaze of an Irish newsboy, or a hand-organ grinding out the "Ah! che la morte," which brought back the half-lighted piano and Katrine's singing in

the twilight; the dreariest, most sordid details of existence reminded him, who needed no reminding, of the time that he himself had decreed should be no more.

For three days he endured Bar Harbor before he fled to the Canadian woods with no companion save a guide. He gave his address to none save his mother, and for six weeks tramped until his body ached for rest; rowed the sombre lakes for exhaustion and peace of mind, cursing the fact that he was a Ravenel, and knowing full well that his conduct was both foolish and illogical.

At the first stop for letters he found one from his mother, which disturbed him more than any letter of hers had ever done before. She wrote:

DEAREST LADDY,—I am writing in much haste and some perturbation of mind for your advice. Last night, at the Desmonds', Nick van Rensselaer came to me after dinner for a chat. I knew he had something upon his mind when he wasted his time talking to a woman.

And what do you think it was? The most astounding, impossible, quixotic, unlanguageable thing in the world! He wants to send Katrine Dulany abroad to study. He wants it to be done in my name, however, so that it will in nowise compromise her, and wishes to have all the credit of the kindness given to me. He

says he does not want to be known in the matter at all; that the girl can regard the money as a loan, and return it to him if she becomes a great singer, of which resulting he seems to have no doubt.

You see the part I shall be forced to take in the affair. I have asked him for a few days to consider the proposition, and am writing you for advice.

When are you coming? Every one is asking about you. Lovingly always, MOTHER.

Lying on his back watching the crooked blue spots of the sky through the tree-tops of a Canadian forest, Francis read this letter over and over, and as he did so it seemed strange to him that he had not thought to help Katrine in this way himself. If she ever found out that he had done so she would probably never forgive him, but there were ways, he reasoned, to arrange it so that she could never find out.

His decision being made, he acted upon it immediately, and that night two letters, one addressed:

MONSIEUR PAUL ROGALLE,
de Rogalle, Dupont et Cie,
Paris, France,

and another:

M. JOSEF,
Faubourg Saint Honoré,

were mailed by him at the neighboring posting-place of Pont du Cœur.

The morning after the writing of these letters Frank started farther north, and heard nothing of the outside world for more than a month. At North Point he found a bundle of letters, two from his mother, and another from Doctor Johnston, enclosing the note which Katrine had written him after her father's death.

He opened the doctor's first, and at sight of the enclosure his heart, in the homely old phrase, came to his throat.

It was a sad letter, thanking the doctor for all he had tried to do, speaking of her father's suffering at some length, parsimonious of detail concerning her own life or future plans.

It was ten o'clock in the hunting-hutch. The night outside was starless, the lamps flickered irregularly, the guides lay heavily asleep in their blankets on beds of pine boughs in the corner. It was a strange place for the birth of a man's soul, but as Frank Ravenel read the letter a tenderness, a selfless tenderness, for the sad little writer of it came to him. He had already protected her from himself—"somewhat late," he confessed, with bitterness, and there had been some effort "not to do the worst." But the feel-

ing that held him as he read was different from any he had had before. He dwelt on her lonesomeness in the world: the long nights she must have passed alone watching the coming of death. Unspeakable tenderness brought a sob to his throat and a pain over his heart, as though suffering from a blow. The remembrance of her on the wind-blown hill came back to him; the scarlet handkerchief waved against the blue of the sky, and the brave call over the brown grass: "*Don't think of me!* Good-bye!" It seemed in some way to have been a cry of victory.

He went to the door of the tent straining his eyes into the blackness. Alone in the great woods with the night noises, under the silent stars, things took on a different value. What was he compared to her?

Stripped of family and wealth, how would each measure before a judging world. "She was so" —he hesitated in his mind for a word—"she was so *square*," he said to himself. Wave after wave of pity swept over him as memory brought back to him her vividness, the fervid speech, the humor, the touch of her. He closed his eyes for a moment, she was in his arms, there came the odor of her dusky hair, and for the first time in his life he was a man.

"Grègoire!" he called to the sleeping guide.

"Oui, monsieur."

"The distance to the nearest railroad?"

"By land—it is sixty miles, m'sieu."

"By the lakes?"

"It is much shorter, but of an extreme dangerousness."

"We will go by the lakes."

"When, m'sieur?"

"To-night, Grègoire!"

XIII

DERMOTT'S INTERVIEW WITH FRANK AT THE TREVOY

IN three days Frank reached New York, where he found mail at the club: from the South; from the Western mines; from women inviting him; as well as five or six messages by wire or mail from one Philip de Peyster, soliciting an immediate interview. Even in his perturbed and planless state these repeated demands made an impression on Frank, and in the morning he telephoned that he was at the Trevoy for the day, and would be pleased to see Mr. de Peyster at his convenience, suggesting the luncheon-hour as a time when both might be free.

Having received no response to his message, at two o'clock he entered the dining-room of the Trevoy alone. After ordering, he sat looking indifferently from one group to another, and noted, with surprise, that Dermott McDermott, with his back toward him, was at the next table

lunching with a number of men, who seemed, to Frank's quick eye, bent on conciliation.

There was nothing in the Irishman's appearance to suggest the man of fashion whom Frank had known in Carolina. His clothes were of rough tweed, he wore an unpicturesque derby hat, and he had the unconsciousness of self which comes from intense occupation with great affairs.

Francis listened to the jolly laugh, the quick evasion, the masterful voice, leading, cajoling; he knew the men were wanting something from McDermott, and realized, as they did not, that it was something the Irishman had determined not to give.

It was of Frank's own home they were speaking, disconnectedly, and in a strange jargon: of Loon Mountain, Way-Home River, road-beds, cost of production, capitalization, bridges.

As he sat wondering at them, their concentration, their unity of thought, their enthusiasm, by one of those throws of fate, which go far toward the making of our lives, Dermott's voice came to him clear and scornful.

"I have heard much, I might say overmuch, recently, of family and ancestors, and have sometimes wondered what those boasted an-

cestors might think were they permitted to see the ineffective descendants who bear their names with neither achievement nor distinction. Now take my own case. My family was well and bitterly known in Ireland as far back as the ninth century. And at the end it availed only enough money to get me through college and over to America. But I've done some things, and with the conceit of the self-made man I'm fond of mentioning them. Directly or indirectly, five thousand people depend on me for daily bread. It's helped the world that I've lived. It's not what a man is born to, I ask. Family? To hell with family! The question is: What have you done?"

If the words had been spoken directly to him, they could not have stung Frank more than they did. What had he done? It was Katrine's question, and he recalled the lovable, vibrant little figure on the lodge steps demanding of him if he had no desire to work, no wish to take part in the great constructive affairs of men.

The group at the next table rose with an approval of Dermott's final words, and, cigars lighted, were going their several ways, when the Irishman turned and, apparently seeing Frank for the first time, came toward him with a smile, hand outstretched.

"It's good to see you again, Ravenel!" he cried. "If you're alone I'll smoke at your table for a minute or two." He waved a farewell to the men who awaited him. It was a farewell as well as a dismissal. "You've heard the news of Dulany, I suppose?"

"Only a few days ago. I have been fishing in the Canadian woods. I can scarcely say how sorry I am."

"Ah, well! Ah, well! Ye did all ye could for him," said McDermott, genially, "and it's probably for the best. Everything is, you know," he added. "But I thought you might be interested to hear something of the little girl. She has just sailed for France. I saw her off. *Transatlantique*—yesterday. She has gone to Paris to study with Josef."

Both men scrutinized each other steadily for a short time, but at the game they were now playing Francis was by far the keener.

"Mother wrote me nearly six weeks ago about somebody's suggesting such a plan for Miss Dulany. Wait a minute," he continued, feeling in his pockets, "here's her letter now."

He gave his mother's screed to McDermott, determined that the Irishman should not suspect the part which he had taken in Katrine's affairs,

and was rewarded by seeing McDermott return the letter apparently convinced.

"Nick van Rensselaer! So that's the way of it," he remarked. "Josef simply wrote her to come, that everything had been arranged by some great lady. There were no conditions save that she should write to her unknown benefactor once a month. The money is to be repaid when Katrine becomes a great singer.

"It's just as well—just as well!" Dermott said, after a silence, peering into the cloud of smoke he had blown ceilingward, as though to foretell the future. "Ye see, Mr. Ravenel, if she will so far honor me, I'm intending some day to marry Katrine Dulany."

There was again the challenge of the eyes, but Frank's training stood him well as he raised his brows with genuine surprise. "So?" he said. "I think no one suspected in Carolina."

"I hope not," McDermott returned. "You see, she's but a child; eighteen years! And a man protects that age from mistakes, as you, of course, know."

The lids came down over his inscrutable gray-blue eyes as McDermott spoke.

"And, besides, I have had so little to offer her." There was real humility in the tone now. "When

the Almighty gives special attention to the making of such a person as Katrine Dulany, it behooves the rest of us mortals to respect His handiwork, doesn't it? I've some poor gifts, some money, a nine-century-old name. There's a title, too, been lying loose in the family since sixteen hundred and I forget what year. But I want her to be sure of herself. As for the study with Josef, it will be good for her, but the idea of Katrine on the stage is an absurdity. I've a cousin in Paris—the Countess de Nemours, a very great lady, though I say it as shouldn't," he said, with a laugh, "whom I am hoping to interest in the little girl. She's no longer young. By-the-way, perhaps you've met her! Her miniature hangs in the hall of Ravenel House."

"In the hall at Ravenel?" Francis repeated, in genuine surprise.

Dermott nodded. "Under the sconces on the left of the mantelshelf."

"Ah!" Frank cried. "I remember, a beautiful girl in green. It was found among my father's papers only last year. It was a relic of his life abroad."

"Yes," Dermott answered, with a curious smile, "that's just what it was. A relic of his life abroad. Well, good-bye and good luck to

you," he said, rising, and Francis noted anew the grace of movement, the distinctive pallor, the humor of the great gray eyes as McDermott turned suddenly to come back to him. "Forgive me, Ravenel," he said, taking his hat and stick from a self-abasing waiter, "for dragging you into my private affairs in the way I have done, but somehow I thought it might interest you to know of my love for Katrine," and, humming an old song, he went his devious Celtic way.

"Three seventeen! Three seventeen! Mr. Ravenel! Three seventeen!" Dreaming over McDermott's story, Frank realized that a call-boy was charging around the dining-room screaming his name and room number. "Mr. Philip de Peyster."

"Hello, old man!" Frank cried, with genuine pleasure, as Mr. de Peyster came forward. "I found so many messages from you, I fear the worst. You're wanting me to stand up with you, I take it."

De Peyster shook his head. "Nothing so bad as that. I *have* rather overwhelmed you with messages and things, haven't I? It's only business, however, not matrimony. I'm sorry, Frank," he added, laughing, "to let you in for a

business talk this way. I know how you hate it. Therefore, I hurry. Ravenel Plantation lies between two large railroads. To get from one to another it is necessary to make triangles. There were a half-dozen of us here last spring who conceived the idea of building a direct road along the south bank of the Silver Fork, joining the two roads, like the middle line of the letter H. We believed that the growth in that region of cotton mills, tanneries, and wood manufacture warranted it. You know Dermott McDermott?" he asked, abruptly.

"Know him!" Frank answered. "The Almighty alone does that, I fancy. I am acquainted with him."

"Whether he got word of the scheme, or whether by pure accident he went South about the time the plans were maturing, no one knows; but he bought a mica-mine, started a tannery, and secured, on the south side of the Silver Fork, a tract of land which lies almost in the centre of our proposed line. It's but ten or fifteen acres, but it goes from the river's edge to Owl Mountain, and we are forced to buy from him, at his own price, tunnel the mountain or go around it, a distance of twenty-two miles, with two streams to bridge. A cheerful prospect! He is holding

the piece of land for which he paid ten or twelve hundred dollars, probably, at forty-five thousand! About a week ago I discovered, through O'Grady, that the title was in your name until quite recently."

"It was," Francis answered, with a queer smile, "it was; but, with unusual business foresight, I sold it to Mr. McDermott myself for eleven hundred dollars. He said he was going to raise eagles on it," he explained, with a laugh.

The flowers, the lights, and the music of the night he had dined at the lodge came back to him. He recalled a touch on his arm, an upturned face with wistful gray eyes, and remembered Katrine's warning. As he did so a great anger came to him at the way he had been used, and his newly awakened manhood called to him for action. There should be another side to the matter, he determined. McDermott's overheard misprisement of the South! His statement of his intentions toward Katrine! The cut of the words, "*She is but eighteen, and one protects that age*," came back to him. There had never come a time in his life before when he would have been in the mood to do the thing he now offered.

"Phil," he said, "there is another bank to the Silver Fork River."

"But it is in your own plantation, and we knew the hopelessness of any proposition to you, Southerner that you are!"

"It would be at least nine miles from Ravenel House," Frank answered, determinedly. "I find I have changed a great deal in my views of things lately," and here he leaned forward on the table toward his friend. "De Peyster," he said, "let us build the railroad together!"

XIV

DERMOTT DISCOVERS A NEW SIDE TO FRANK'S CHARACTER

THE next morning news came to McDermott that his land on the Silver Fork was no longer desired by the newly formed company. It was nearly a fortnight, however, before he learned the railroad was to be built on the Ravenel side of the river.

The information came with abruptness from John Marix, a gaminlike broker, who encountered McDermott in the elevator to their mutual offices.

"Say, McDermott," he cried, with a cheerful laugh, "Ravenel didn't do a thing to you, did he? *He didn't do a thing to you!*" he repeated, with a lively chuckle.

McDermott's eyes were bland on the instant. He did not understand the little man's meaning. What he did understand, always understood, however, was that he must never be taken off guard in the game of life.

"I am the football of the Street," he said, with a kind of cheerful despondency. "Everybody does me!"

"Yes they do!" the other responded, derisively. "It's because you've done everybody that we're glad somebody's got even for a minute! But"—dropping the bantering tone—"this Ravenel is something of a wonder. I was at the meeting of the new company to-day. He's full of the scheme, knows every foot of the land, and is willing to put a whole bunch of money into it. We've elected him president of the concern."

By the same afternoon the facts of the case were in McDermott's possession, and the following morning, upon seeing Frank about to enter the De Peyster offices, he advanced toward him, hand outstretched. He was entirely unprepared for the manner in which he was received. Frank nodded to him slightingly, with the scant courtesy he might have accorded a domestic whom he disliked, and said, with directness, looking him squarely in the eyes, "I don't care to shake hands with you, McDermott."

Dermott regarded him steadily in return, the gray gleam in his eyes a bit brighter, the lines of his mouth harder. Whatever the grave faults of these two men may have been, there was not

a whit of cowardice between them as they stood facing each other.

"So!" said Dermott. "So!" And yet a third time he repeated "so!"—his tone one of grave consideration. "Had another done what ye have just done, Mr. Ravenel," he said, at length, "this little episode might not have ended so gayly. But for you I have so slight a respect that there's nothing you could do to me that would make me call ye to account for it." And, raising his hat high and jauntily, he said, with a laugh: "Good-morning, Ravenel!"

Frank turned white at the words, but the Irishman had disappeared in an elevator, and any immediate action seemed impossible and theatric. In the short time he had spent in New York he had learned many things, and the narrow, tiled halls of an office building twenty-three stories high, in Wall Street, did not seem the fitting background for a personal encounter to which the hills of North Carolina might have lent themselves with picturesqueness.

He sat thinking the matter over in the club that night with two things fixed in his mind. First, that he would go to see Katrine in Paris immediately; of the outcome of such a meeting he took no thought whatever. Second, that he

would put this railroad scheme through; already the feeling of power, of the consciousness of unsystematized ability, was stirring within him.

The affair with McDermott rankled, however, and it was with drawn brows and tightened lips that he answered a telephone call—a call which changed both of the plans which he had so carefully arranged.

His mother's doctor at Bar Harbor had rung him up to say Mrs. Ravenel was seriously ill and wanted him to come to her at once. He started at midnight, to find his mother in a high fever, unconscious of his arrival, and facing an operation, as the only chance to save her life.

He had been to her always, as she herself put it, "a perfect son," and for the next three months, which made the time well into December, he proved the words true, living by her bedside, and allowing himself scant sleep from the watching and service.

It was when she was far toward the recovery of her health and her old-time beauty that he spoke to her of his newly formed intentions with characteristic unwordiness.

"I am going into business, mother," he said, "with Philip de Peyster."

She was knitting at the time, counting stitches

on large needles, and she went placidly on with the counting until the set was finished, when she looked up pleasantly. "You think it will amuse you?" she asked, with the kind interest which she might have shown concerning a polo game in which he was to play.

"I am beginning to think a man should have some fixed duties in life," Frank explained.

"Yes, certainly,' Mrs. Ravenel answered. "The Bible says something like that, I believe. What are you thinking of doing?"

"Buying and selling things, like railroads and mines," he answered, smiling at her indifference.

"I'm glad it's Phil de Peyster you are going to buy and sell things with," Mrs. Ravenel said. "His mother was maid of honor at my wedding, and a charming girl, Patty Beauregarde, of Charleston. And I am delighted at anything you do to make you happy, Frank. I have thought you have not been very gay of late. There is, perhaps, a trouble—"

"What an idea!" he answered.

"Will you have offices and things?" Mrs. Ravenel inquired, vaguely. "I have always had ideas for office furnishings, you know."

"If you could see Phil's office, mother, I think

you would weep. It's very dirty, and he likes it. It's the dust of his great-grandfathers."

"Well, dearest," Mrs. Ravenel said, "if it amuses you, I'm glad you thought of doing it," and she folded up her work and put it into her bag. "Life's a rather dreary affair at best," she concluded, "and anything that interests one is a positive boon."

XV

JOSEF

THERE is in the Faubourg St. Honoré, not far from the Hotel of the Silver Scissors, an old house set far back in a court-yard of its own. A gray stone wall, the height of the first two stories, protects both garden and house from the eyes of the passer-by; and, save for the sound of singing, the place seems uninhabited most of the time.

On a misty morning in late November Katrine clapped the knocker of this old house with fear in her heart, for her future hung on the word of the great teacher who lived here, Josef, whose genius, generosity, and brutal frankness were the talk of the musical world. A Brittany peasant woman opened the door with no salutation whatever, for the huge Brigitte, in her white *coiffe* and blue flannel frock, spoke in awed whispers only, when the master was at home.

"Mademoiselle Dulany?" she asked.

Katrine nodded an affirmative.

"The master is expecting you," Brigitte said, leading the way up a wide oak staircase to the second floor, which had been made into one great room. It was a bare place, with no draperies and little furniture. Two grand pianos stood at one end near a small platform, like a model-stand. There were photographs of some great singers on the walls, and a few chairs huddled together.

In the corner at a desk a woman was writing from the dictation of a man who stood gazing out of the window. He turned at Katrine's entrance. She has seen his picture frequently, and knew on the instant that it was Josef, the greatest teacher in Europe—in the world.

"You may go, Zelie," he said to the woman. "I shall not need you till to-morrow." And the dismissal over, he came forward toward Katrine as she stood by the entrance, uncertain what to do.

He was a man about fifty years of age, below the medium height, heavily built, and dressed in black, with a waistcoat buttoned to the collar like a priest's. His hair was iron-gray, his eyes brown, and the pupils of them widened and contracted when he spoke. He had a clean-shaven

face of ivory paleness, a sensuous mouth and chin, and when he looked at Katrine she understood his power, for it seemed to her as though he could see backward to her past and forward to all of her future.

Being alone with her, he motioned her to a seat by the window, near which he remained standing.

"I have been hearing that you have a voice. I have heard great things concerning it. I hope they are true." His tone implied that he had small belief that they were. "You have a serious drawback. You are too rich." She started at this. "The management of your income, however, is given to me, as I suppose you know. Will you be so good as to remove your jacket and hat, and walk up and down the room several times?"

Katrine obeyed.

"Good!" he said, at the first turn; and at the last, "*Very* good! Sing," he said, as abruptly as he had issued his former order.

In the after years she was given to making light of her choice, but the command was scarcely spoken before she began, in her lovely, sonorous voice, the song which it was her heritage to sing well:

"'Tis the most distressful country that ever I have seen,
They're hanging men and women there for wearing of the green."

As she sang the three great stanzas, Josef stood motionless, his lips drawn, his eyes half shut, his face like a wooden man's; but his hands trembled, and as she ended her singing he opened the piano and seated himself in front of it. "Take the notes I strike," he said, "little—very little—so—so—so!" he sang.

Up and down, over and over, listening with his head turned to one side like a dog, he had her sing the tones, saying only, "Once more!" and "yet again!" and "over—over—over!" At last, with a sigh, he closed the instrument. "I am not one given to extravagance in language," he said, "but you have the greatest *natural* voice I have ever heard. It is almost placed. Sit down a minute, I want to talk to you. Two kinds of pupils I have had in my life: those with voice and no temperament, and those with temperament and no voice. God seldom gives both; if He does, it is the great artist that may be made. To be great one must have both. But even with both given, one must have the ability to

work, to work like a galley-slave, to work when all the world is resting, at the dead of night, in the small hours of the morning. When all the others have let go, you must hold on, till your head is tired and your body aches and you faint by the wayside; but you must never let go, you must learn to endure to the end. You will understand me. It is the *mental* part of which I speak. I do not mean that you are to wear your voice or your body out practising. It's something far harder. You must learn to surrender yourself, to lose your life to have it!" He looked at her keenly. She was drinking his words in, as it were, and the expression on her face assured even him. "Do you want me," he said, suddenly coming nearer, "to tell you about yourself; what I see in you?"

She bent her head, quivering from head to foot, before the power of this man, who seemed uncanny in his knowledge.

"You have had some great sorrow. It is an unhappy love-affair. I understand." Here he smiled his critical, unfathomable, remote smile. "You are not yet eighteen, and have been capable of a great sorrow! Child," he said, "thank God for it! You have a voice of gold. We will make of that sorrow diamonds and rubies and

pearls to set in the voice, so that the world will stand at gaze before you. When you have real insight you will know that nothing was ever taken from us that more was not put in its place."

"Master," she said, with something of his own abruptness, "may I talk to you a little, a very little, about myself?"

Already Josef realized the charm of her companionship as well as the adoring humility with which her eyes shone into his and the unquestioning way she placed herself under his direction. He nodded his permission with a smile.

"I want to be taught in *everything*. I know so little. It is not book studies I mean. I want to learn to be bigger, to think great thoughts. I want, most of all, to develop the power to be happy, to make the people around me happy. *Most*, I want" — she drew up her chest and made an outward gesture with her arms, a gesture significant of her whole nature in its indication of courage and generosity—"I want," she repeated, "to grow soul!"

Josef laughed aloud. "Ah," he cried, "you funny, little, unusual thing! I'm glad you've come to me. We will study, study, *and grow soul together*, you and I. We will not accumulate

facts to be laid on shelves, like mental lumber, but grow bigger thoughts: see ourselves and people clearer that the work may be broadened. And we will find our ideals changing, changing, getting bigger, higher. And the little people will fall away from us, like Punch-and-Judy shows, painlessly, with kind thoughts, because we will have no further use for them. Wait! Trust the master! Nothing makes one forget like a great art! In three—four years, you will meet the man, and say: 'Ach, Heaven! is it for this I suffered? Stupid me! Praise God things are as they are, and that I still have Josef.'"

"I have thought sometimes," Katrine went on, "that men have many fine traits, which, without becoming masculine, women might study to acquire. I remember once I went to spend the day with a boy and a girl whose mother punished them both for some slight misdeameanor. Afterward the girl cried all the rest of the morning, but the boy went out and made a swing, and in a little while was quite happy. I was only five, but I saw then, and later, that women bear their sorrows differently from men. I don't want to cry; I want to make swings."

"Very well. It is *very* well," said the great man, and there was a mist in his eyes as he looked

at the valiant little creature. "It's a great gospel—that! I wish I could teach it to every woman on earth. *Don't cry! Make swings!*"

She had resumed her hat and jacket, and, with the lesson-day slip in her hand, was at the farther door, when she turned with sweetest pleading in her eyes. "Illustrious One!" she said, "I've not told you all. I've not asked you what I really want to know."

Already there was between them that quick comprehension of each other which exists for those people who have special gift.

"Well?" he said, waiting with a smile.

"You remember a pupil of yours named Charlotte Hopkins?"

"Very well, indeed."

"You changed her greatly."

"It is to be hoped so," he answered, with a laugh.

"She told me much of you: of your power, of your ability to make people over. And she said you had studied in the East, and had learned how to make people do your will, even when they were far away from you. Is it true?"

"Some say so," he answered.

"It is not hypnotism?" she questioned.

"I'm no Svengali, if that's what you mean,"

he responded, grimly. "I'll watch you, Katrine Dulany, and, if I find you worthy, some day I may tell you more."

More moved by her personality than he had been by any other in the twenty-five years of his teaching, he stood by the window and watched her cross the court-yard below and disappear through the great iron gates.

"Poor little girl!" he thought. "Beauty and gift and a divine despair. Everything ready to make the great artist. And then the heart of a woman, which is like quicksilver, to reckon with. I spoke bravely about her forgetting, but I have doubts. Sometimes I wonder if it be possible for a person with a fine and generous nature to become a really great artist. Perhaps it is necessary to have great egotism and selfishness for the arts' development. I wonder," he said, aloud; repeating, after a minute's silence, "I wonder—"

XVI

MRS. RAVENEL UNWITTINGLY BECOMES AN ALLY OF KATRINE

AFTER his mother's recovery Frank went back to New York immediately, keen to arrange the railroad matters and get the actual work started. In the first interview with De Peyster, however, he found that Dermott McDermott was far from being out of the reckoning.

"It is rumored," said De Peyster, "that he is trying to elect himself president of N. C. & T. road. If he succeeds he can control the traffic in Carolina to such an extent that our line would be a failure, even if built."

"Then," returned Frank, and any one who loved him would have gloried at the set of his mouth and chin as he spoke, "he mustn't be allowed to be president of the N. C. & T. We must buy up the proxies."

Before the end of the week, however, they were surprised again by the news that McDermott

had refused to consider the presidency of the N. C. & T. road, even if tendered him, and had given out that he would sail for Europe within a fortnight for an indefinite stay.

"But," De Peyster ended, as he repeated the news to Frank, "if you think he's whipped you don't know him! I'm more anxious over this last move than if he stayed right here and fought us openly. There is more to it than we know."

In silence Frank held the same belief, though he reasoned that McDermott's European trip could be well explained by his affection for Katrine; and so the thought of Dermott away from New York disturbed him far more than it did Philip De Peyster, but for very different reasons.

It was at Bar Harbor that he received the first letter from Katrine, in accordance with the compact that she should write her benefactor once a month. The letter had been forwarded from his Paris bankers, enclosed with business letters in a great envelope.

With a throbbing heart he opened it. She had touched it; it had been near her; one of those small, soft hands, with the dimples at the base of the fingers, had penned the strange, small writing:

DEAR UNKNOWN ONE,—There is little to tell. I go every day to Josef. He thinks it possible I may become a great singer.

I wonder about you, and feel something like Pip in "Great Expectations," only I know how good and great you must be. Isn't it fine to be like a fairy princess, who can do anything for people she chooses? And to have the heart to help—ah, that is the best of all.

In my mind, for we Irish imagine always, I have made you a stately lady, perhaps not very strong, who is much alone and has had a great sorrow, who helps the world because it is good to help. So every month I will send you letters of what I do and dream to do. If you are alone much, it may amuse you to read of my queer life here in Paris. If my letters bore you, you will not have to read them. I want only to show that I appreciate your help and your interest in me. To know Josef is the greatest thing, save one, that has come to my life. He gives me little slips of writing to pin up in my room to learn by heart. The last one read:

"What is it that enables one to live through the dead calm which succeeds a passionate desolation? Good work and hard work. The way to live well is to work well."

Ever gratefully yours,

KATRINE DULANY.

Another letter came in the same mail, which Frank read with a distaste for the writer of it,

for the affair that made such a letter possible. It was from another woman, but something in the fervent little soul beyond the seas called to him, to the best in him, and he tore the other note to pieces and wrote a line or two in answer which closed an affair before it was well begun.

For two months he had carried a letter which he had written to Katrine during the first week of his mother's illness. He took it from his pocket and read it over now, wondering if it were wise to send it:

"I heard of your great sorrow sixty miles from a railroad in the Canadian woods. I started that night to see if I could help you. To speak truth, Katrine, I don't know why I started to come to you, except that I could not stay away.

"In New York I met McDermott, who told me you had sailed to study with Josef. This did not change my plans in the least. But there came the question of that land on the other side of the river which detained me for several days, and then my mother's dangerous illness.

"I have been with her constantly since—the crisis is past, but she is still too ill for me to leave her. I am coming to you just as soon as I can. And I am going to ask you to forgive me, to take me and make whatever you can out of my worthless self. Whatever of

good there is in me has come through you. You have given me belief in purity and selflessness and hope of achievement.

"Don't remember me as I was; don't do that Little One; only as I hope to be; as I hope you will help me to be. I am coming for your answer the first minute I can get away.

"FRANCIS RAVENEL."

There had been many reasons for not sending this letter: his mother's illness; his sudden plunge into business; but underneath all was the fear, which grew larger day by day, that he might receive from Katrine the rebuff which his conduct toward her so richly merited.

Uncertainly he held the letter, reviewing one of the curious turns that life had taken in giving Katrine an ally in his mother.

On one of his week-end visits to Bar Harbor, where Mrs. Ravenel was still staying, her old gayety had led her one evening to the teasing subject of his marrying. He was standing by the open casement, looking into the twilight over the sea, when he answered her, and he could not hide the break in his voice as he spoke. "I have the misfortune to love the wrong woman, mother!"

"Frank!" The cry of alarm and tenderness and protest touched him strangely.

"Yes," he went on, "and it's a hard fight."

She came near, putting her hand tenderly on his cheek. "Ah," she said, "my boy, my boy!"

He drew her to him, and for the minute he seemed, indeed, a boy again, coming to this sure haven of comfort, to the place where he had never been criticised or told that he was wrong. "Yes, lady mother, I'm hard hit. I fell in love with one whom I didn't think it square to the family to marry. We have never made mésalliances, in this country or the other. I believed, and I believe still, that a man owes it to his descendants, to the furthest generation, to marry for them. I believed, and I believe still, that marriage is far less a matter of personal inclination than most people consider it to be. I believe that when a man marries a woman he does not marry her alone, but all of her ancestors, and that he may expect to see the maternal grandfathers appearing again in his own grandchildren."

"Certainly, dear," Mrs. Ravenel acquiesced, in a tone which indicated there could be but one opinion on such a subject.

"You know how firmly I have believed this always, mother!"

She pressed his hand for reply.

"I told her that I could never marry her. But the thing was too strong for me—I went away from the place where she was. Oh," he cried, in a heat of self-abasing, "I grow cold when I think what a cad I was! I hurt her so! But I did, too late, what I thought was right, what I had been trained to do."

Far into the night, lying sleepless, with his hands folded under his head, there came a light tap at his door, and he knew his mother had come to him. She wore a rose-colored dressing-gown, and at sight of it he remembered, with tenderness, how she had always longed "to be beautiful to him."

Kneeling by the bed, she put her gentle arms around his neck, laying her soft cheek against his own. And the way everything in life falls down before mother-love could surely never be shown better than in her talk with him, in which she renounced almost every inherited belief to try to make life happier for him.

"Onliest One!" she said. It was her baby name for him.

"Yes, Miss Cora," he answered. They were the first words, learned from the negroes, that his childhood lips had ever formed.

"I couldn't sleep. You remember how I

never could bear to see you suffer. I seem to go mad, to lose all self-control if you are not happy. And I came to tell you that it isn't true, that talk about marriage. I know it. I knew it when I taught you all the foolishness about family and position, and helped you to have the pride of Lucifer. Ah," she cried, "I suffered enough to know it isn't true! There is just one thing on earth that makes marriage endurable: a great and overmastering love. Marriage is the one thing about which for the good of the race, for the good of the race," she repeated, "we have a right to be divinely selfish."

"Perhaps it's true, mother mine, but the knowledge comes too late."

"No, it hasn't, boy!" she answered. "It hasn't. If I were a man and wanted a woman, I wouldn't let her wishes interfere in the matter. I would carry her off, if necessary. It was a good, old-time way—that!" she cried, earnestly.

"Mother! Mother! Mother!" Frank remonstrated, with a laugh, though with tears in his eyes.

"And you will have her if you want her; for you are so beautiful and dear and sweet, no woman could help loving you."

And with this biased assurance he fell asleep, as she sat by his bedside with her hand on his cheek.

XVII

McDERMOTT VISITS HIS FRENCH COUSIN

IT was true that Dermott's sudden departure for Europe had troubled Frank. But it would have disturbed him more had he known the truth, for McDermott was not only bent upon seeing Katrine, but was stirring another trouble for Frank, a trouble which McDermott felt had already slept too long.

The week before the Irishman sailed (it was the very day upon which he decided, with a laugh to himself, to give up the railroad fight and allow the new company to build the road on the Ravenel land) he wrote his French cousin, the Countess de Nemours, thus:

BEAUTIFUL LADY WITHOUT MERCY,—I am writing in a perturbed state of mind, for I think I shall get for you a great fortune. You do not answer my letters, though I have written at the lowest estimate ten thousand times. I want the date of your first marriage securely stated in written evidence; also the dates of the

birth and death of the child. I want every scrap of paper which you have, concerning that sad affair of thirty years ago, ready for me when I arrive in Paris two weeks from to-day.

There is a little girl over there studying music in whom I want you to interest yourself. Her name is Katrine Dulany. She is with Josef.

Yours of the Shamrock,

DERMOTT MCDERMOTT.

The Countess de Nemours' house in Paris stood in the centre of the street of the Two Repentant Magdalens. An iron door in a grifoned arch opened into a sunny court-yard, where peacocks strutted by an old fountain, and a black poodle, who was both a thief and a miser, snarled at the passers-by.

On the right of the entrance, in a kind of sentry-box, Quantrelle the Red acted as *concierge*. He was a man above the peasant class, ridiculously long and spare, with an unbroken record for thirty years of drunkenness and quarrelling. His narrow head was covered with irregular tufts of scarlet hair, and in his forehead were heavy furrows which curved down over the nose and waved upward and back to the temple. His eyebrows were red tufts standing fiercely out over his little red-brown eyes, and his nose, long,

lean, and absurdly pointed, seemed peering at his great teeth, yellowed by much smoking of cigarettes. He added to his charms an attire intentionally bizarre, for he dressed himself, so to speak, in character. And with these natural and achieved drawbacks to his appearance he had the temper of a wasp, so that it was small wonder that questionings were rife as to the reason of his retention, his *overpaid* retention, in the De Nemours' household. He had a wit of his own, had Quantrelle. Frequently his pleasing fancy led him to admit visitors when he knew Madame de Nemours to be absent, and, after conducting them by some circuitous route to unexpected rooms, he would leave them waiting until discovered by any chance domestic who happened by. And when they were ushered forth to the street he would follow them with a torrent of shrill apology, retiring, in a paroxysm of silent laughter, behind the shutters of his little box. Why Madame de Nemours endured his vagaries was indeed strange, for she was one who demanded of every other domestic something of an over-obsequiousness in service. It was a well-known fact, however, that he held an assured position in the household, and that the Countess only smiled at his grimaces and

drinking, rewarding him with frequent gifts and holidays in the country.

On the morning of Dermott's coming, Quantrelle the Red sat in his little house peering out, monkeylike, expectantly, at the passers-by, and craning his long neck to keep a constant eye on the corner around which the Irishman was to arrive. As the brougham drew up to the curb the Red One sprang to his feet, threw the iron doors wide apart, and stood bowing double as McDermott entered.

"Ah, my Quantrelle!" he cried, gayly, at sight of the thin grotesqueness. "Still in your old place; still taking care of madame!"

"Till the end," was the answer, with a serious note in the voice.

"You have not changed much in the three years since I saw you last," Dermott said, inspecting him closely.

"Nor you, monsieur," Quantrelle answered. "In fact, you have changed little since twelve years ago, when I hid you and young Monsieur de Chevanne on top of my box here, after some escapade, to keep you both from the police." He scrutinized McDermott closely as he spoke. "And it's not the money (which I know well you will give me anyhow) which makes me say you

are more beautiful than ever, monsieur. The same elegant pallor; the same pursuit in the eye! Had I had your looks"; he made a clucking sound in his cheek with his tongue; "and your clothes! Always the blacks and grays and very elegant! They are not my colors," he drew himself to his straightest to exhibit his maroon coat and trousers and wide green cravat with an assumed satisfaction; "but each has his own style," he finished.

McDermott laughed. "You are sober, Quantrelle!"

"Distressingly so, monsieur!"

"And if I give you money you would use it for—" McDermott paused.

"Charity, monsieur," the Red One answered, his eyes drooped religiously. He took the gold coin which Dermott gave him, tossed it into the sunshine, and slipped it into his pocket with a bow. "You will notice, I honor your integrity by not biting it to see if it be counterfeit."

"Knowing your character, it is indeed a compliment," McDermott said. "Au revoir, my Quantrelle!"

"Au revoir, Monsieur l'Irlandais!"

And Dermott passed.

Inside he found the Countess waiting in the

drawing-room, and she greeted him with hands outstretched, kissing him on both cheeks in the French fashion. Afterward she stood regarding him with a slow, sweet smile, which came from one of the kindest hearts in the world.

"And this," she said, in a beautiful, quiet, warm voice, "is the Irish cousin who has not been to see me for so very long!"

Although past fifty, she was tall and slight, with the grace of a girl. Her hair, white and soft and wavy, was worn high in a style quite her own; her skin was pink and white as a child's; her blue eyes shone with tenderness, and they had a merry, dancing light in them continually. Her face was of a delicate oval, with a nose slender, beautifully modelled, and exceptionally high between the eyes. She wore a green-white dress of cloth individual in its cut and very plain, with an old silver belt and brooch to match. Her hands, fragile and beautiful as shells, were ringless.

"It seems so perfectly flat to say that I am glad to see you, doesn't it?" she asked, as Dermott smiled down at her.

"I like it just the same," he answered.

"When did you get in?" she inquired.

"I came over from Havre yesterday. I was

busy with some English folk about a mine, or I would have tried to see you last evening."

"And you will stay—" She paused.

"Ten days at most."

"Ah!" she said. "That's horrid! You will miss so many pleasant things! A Bernhardt first night for one."

"I'm a horny-handed son of toil, beautiful cousin," he answered, "and I have come on business only."

There was a pause, which Dermott felt the Countess was waiting for him to break.

"Patricia," he said, a beautiful consideration for her in his voice, "I want to spare you in every way I can in reviewing the bitter business of your early marriage. I have written you only what was absolutely necessary for you to know. I discovered by accident that your first husband left quite an estate. If you were his wife and had a living child at the time of his death, and if these facts can be established, this property belongs to you. You have not as much money as you should have. I shall get his estate for you—if I can."

"About the records?" she inquired.

"If you have them ready I shall go over to

Tours to-morrow to make a search for the sister of the priest."

"Dermott, dear," the Countess said, putting her hand on his shoulder affectionately, "you are not going to make trouble for any one, are you?"

"Am I not?" he answered, with a short laugh. "Am I not?"

She took a bundle of papers, which she had evidently prepared for him, from a desk which stood between the windows, but made no motion to give them to him.

"It's all so far in the past," she said, "no one can ever know what I suffered. But I want no one else to suffer in order that I may have what you term my rights."

"Patricia," Dermott answered, gravely, "the thing is all a bit in the air as yet. Your first marriage will be difficult to establish. The French law requires such absolute proof that I may not be able to obtain it. Now, don't let us discuss the matter further, nor worry that kind heart of yours." He patted her head affectionately as he spoke.

In the years past she had known him well enough to remember his moods, and she gave him the papers in silence.

"About Mademoiselle Dulany," she continued. "Since your letter, I have made inquiries concerning her. I shall be glad to know her, for her own sake as well as yours."

"I'm going to ask a great favor of you for her, Patricia," he answered. "You live in this great house alone. It would be better to have more people about you. I want you to see much of her, for I am hoping that some day she may be my wife."

He spoke the last word tenderly, a bit wistfully.

"Ah, Dermott," she cried, "I had no idea! I shall be so glad to do anything I can! Why couldn't she come and stay with me?"

"That is like you," he answered, gratefully; "but such things can never be arranged happily. They must grow. Wait until you meet her. I am to see her to-night. I will bring her to you to-morrow, if I may."

"It is arranged, this marriage?" she asked, delighted at a bit of romance.

"Not in the least," he answered, concisely.

"But she loves you?"

"On the contrary," he said, quietly, "she loves another."

"And you are hoping—" The Countess hesitated.

"Not hoping," Dermott answered, "determined."

"How old is she?"

"Nearly nineteen, and Irish."

"Irish girls are hard to change."

"But you loved your second husband, did you not?" Dermott inquired.

"I hope I was a good wife," the Countess answered, evasively, adding, "But you remember our own Tom Moore!"

"'The wild freshness of morning—'?"

Dermott stood looking into the fire, his eyes drooped, his face saddened.

"But there is something else to remember as well," Madame de Nemours said, touching him on the shoulder and looking up at him admiringly. "The half-gods go when the gods arrive. And you have everything in your favor. You are so great a man and such a charming fellow, Dermott!"

On the following day Katrine came alone to see Madame de Nemours, Dermott having concluded wisely that his presence would be but a drawback to any quick acquaintance between the two.

"I am Katrine," the girl answered, in response

to the Countess' query. "Mr. McDermott has been so kind as to send me to you."

"It came about in this way," the Countess explained, drawing Katrine to a couch and still keeping her hand. "There was a time when I knew Dermott, my cousin, very well. That was in Ireland, before he became the great man he now is. Since that time we have written to each other always, for he has been kind enough to give me his friendship. He came yesterday. I was sad, and told him of my lonesomeness. It is best, is it not, to be quite frank when two people are meeting as you and I are doing? In spite of all this," and here she made a slight gesture to include her luxurious surroundings, "I am quite a poor woman. And so when I told Dermott that I was lonesome in this great house, with none but servants, no companions, he spoke to me of you. He was quite practical. He said that you spent much money as you were living. He told me of your great beauty and your greater voice. I became very much interested in you, and we arranged for this talk. Now that I have seen you, I want you to come and live with me very much, *very* much." She was so charming in her kindness, this great lady! "But you may not desire it. The situation is awkward for me." She

smiled here, and a humorous light danced in her eyes, for with all her graciousness she was quite certain of her charm. "And so we will leave you to think it over and tell Mr. McDermott, who will in turn tell the decision to me. That will save my vanity from being hurt openly in case you do not come."

Impulsively, Katrine clasped both the Countess' hands in hers.

"I want to come very much," she said. "There was never any one with whom I would rather be. I know now that you are the lady of whom Monsieur Josef spoke to me once. 'Ach!' he said, you know his way, 'she is the greatest lady in the world! It is not what she *does*, but what she *is* so beautifully.'"

As Katrine spoke with the earnestness of voice and manner always her own, the Countess leaned forward suddenly with a startled look.

"Who is it that you remind me of?" she cried, drawing her black brows together. "If I could only think! Who is it that you remind me of?"

XVIII

KATRINE MEETS ANNE LENNOX

DURING McDermott's ten days' stay in Paris, Katrine saw him constantly. The evening after her first visit to the Countess he received with a gay air of irresponsibility the news that she was to take up her residence with Madame de Nemours, and though he personally assisted in the establishing of herself and Nora in the queer old house, it was with the manner of one in no way responsible for what was going forward.

Some sunny rooms on the third floor were given her, a great piano was enthroned in a bright corner, gay flowers bloomed against the faded tapestry, and the Countess urged her to choose from many pictures the ones she desired for intimate friends.

She knew that McDermott visited Josef to speak of her, and that he returned delighted with the visit; but in all of his attentions there seemed

even to the watchful eyes of the Countess more brotherly kindness than the solicitude of a lover. On the night before his return to the States he had a long talk with Madame de Nemours. His visit to Tours had resulted in nothing, and it was with some depression of spirits that he was making his farewells.

But the Countess was too much occupied with her new protégé to be downcast over any mythical inheritance in America, and as she stood under the lamps in the doorway bidding him farewell, she said, with girlish enthusiasm: "Don't you think about it any more. I have enough to live on nicely. And as for that glorious Katrine, I'll deave her ears with your name! No praises. Ah, I'm too old and wise for that! It will be this way. 'It's a pity,' I'll say, 'that Dermott is not better-looking,' and she'll answer, 'Sure he's one of the handsomest men in the world.' And the next day, 'How unfortunate he is so niggardly?' 'Niggardly!' she'll cry. 'He gives away everything he has. He's the soul of generosity!' Ah, trust me!" the Countess ended. "She shall persuade herself there's none other like you. And there's not!" she cried, kissing her hand to him as he went down the steps.

Within the week after McDermott's leaving

Paris there occurred two events, seemingly remote from Katrine's existence, which later wrought the greatest changes in her life.

The first of these was the alarming illness of Quantrelle the Red. After a day of peculiarly unbearable conduct on his part, the other domestics in the house had revolted, and late in the evening turned him out to pass the night in his fireless sentry-box. For ten days after this occurrence he hovered between life and death with an inflammation of the lungs, during which period the De Nemours' household learned his real power, for the Countess flew into a paroxysm of rage at his treatment, discharged the cook and one of the upper maids, harangued the others, sent for the best doctors in Paris, and herself assisted in the nursing, taking little sleep or nourishment until the old fellow was well on his way to recovery.

During all of this turmoil Katrine went quietly back and forth to her lessons, in no way questioning the conduct of the Countess, for she understood to the full that human hearts form attachments by no rule.

One evening during Quantrelle's convalescence, when the Countess was her sunny self again, she offered, unasked, an explanation of her seemingly singular conduct.

"Little person," she said, putting her hand on Katrine's shoulder, "you mustn't judge too harshly my Irish temper. It was gratitude to Quantrelle which made me act as I did. There were two years of my life when I should have died but for him."

It was an amazing statement, and Katrine's face showed her astonishment.

"When I was sixteen," Madame de Nemours continued, "I was sent to a convent school at Tours. Quantrelle's father was gate-keeper there, and let me pass out the night I went to be married. I was only a child." The Countess covered her face with both hands, as though to shut out some horrid sight. "He was an American, a Protestant, and my father cursed me. Two years after the marriage my husband deserted me. Perhaps," she paused in her story, "perhaps Dermott has told you this?"

"He has never spoken of it to me," said Katrine.

"After my baby came," Madame de Nemours continued, "I was alone with poverty and ill health, and for two years, *two years*," she repeated, impressively, "Quantrelle, a long, thin-legged, red-haired boy, kept me alive with the money he could earn and the scant assistance his mother could lend him. It was eleven years

later, four years after my baby's death and my father's forgiveness, that I married the Count. Katrine, darling, I gave him a great affection and entire devotion, but my heart died with the first love. To have that first year over! Ah, there was never another like him! You could never know, Katrine, how different he was from others."

"It was long ago?" Katrine asked.

"Thirty years. Dermott has recently been demanding papers of me. It seems there may be some property in America belonging to my first husband which he can claim for me."

A premonition of the truth came to Katrine at the sound of Dermott's name.

"And your first husband's name?" she inquired. "Will it pain you to tell it?"

"Not at all," the Countess answered, with a sad smile. "It was Francis Ravenel."

The sound of the name itself brought no shock to Katrine. She seemed to have heard it before it was spoken, but she made no sign.

She knew it was Frank's father of whom Madame de Nemours spoke, and the tales of him in North Carolina had more than prepared her for wild doings in his student days. It seemed strange, however, that Frank had never spoken of an early marriage of his father. But the more

she thought of it, the firmer became her belief that he had never known it.

It was not until the gray of the following morning that she comprehended to the full the weighty significance of Madame de Nemours' early marriage, and saw clearly the significance of Dermott's stay in Carolina, with the direful resulting that might come to Frank from the Irishman's investigations there.

"If Frank's father married in America, with a wife and child living in France—" But here Katrine stopped in her thinking, putting the idea from her mind as one too horrid to entertain.

The second apparently disconnected event which led by a circuitous route to the death of Madame de Nemours, as well as to the discovery of that missing witness for whom McDermott long had searched, was announced quietly by the Countess herself one morning of the following May.

Looking up from the Paris *Herald*, she said to Katrine, "I see that Anne Lennox has leased the old Latour Place in the Boulevard Haussmann for an indefinite period."

The three months following the coming of Mrs. Lennox made no change in their lives whatever. Katrine was aware that Madame de Nemours and

Anne exchanged visits of courtesy, each missing the other, but early in July she went with the Countess and Josef to Brittany and spent the summer in work, the world forgetting and by the world forgot.

And the divine days with Josef by the sea! His wisdom, his temper, his splendid intolerance, his prophetic imaginings, as he stormed at the imbecility of his kind!

"It's this damned idea of realism that's killing art!" he shrieked one day, on the rocks at Concarneau. "Who wants things natural? If Jones and Smith could be taught by reiterating life as it is, the race of fools would soon become extinct. My neighbor loves his neighbor's wife, and they go off together and there is murder done. Does the reading of this in book or paper stop my going off with the woman I love if I have the chance? Not a whit! Art must raise one's ideals. It's the only thing that helps you, me, any one!"

Or, again, and this was at twilight, waiting under the old crucifix for the herring-boats to come in: "Anybody with eyesight can imitate the *actual*. The *real!* What has the creative mind to do with that? It is not one great and innocent-minded girl you are to represent in Marguerite,

it is *all* girlhood in its innocence and surrender."

And another time, on the way home from Pont-Aven:

"Women of detail, women who indulge themselves in soul-wearying repetition of the little affairs of life, have driven more men to perdition than all the Delilahs ever created."

And Katrine and he laughed together at his anathema, and went forward into a dusky French twilight, singing as they went.

Around her room she pinned the written slips which he gave at every lesson, Scripture which seemed perverted to uses other than its own.

"He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

"Live with Goethe's Faust—learn it. You will understand Gounod's better.

"All art comes from the same kind of nature. If you didn't sing yours, you would paint it, carve it, write it, play it out; for, if it is in you to create something artistic, nothing human can stop your doing it.

"There are no mute, inglorious Miltons. Every one who has the qualifications for success succeeds."

As time passed the letters to her unknown

benefactor became more and more intimate in tone by reason of her race and youth. No answer ever coming to any of them, it was as though her thoughts were written and cast into the eternal silence.

Upon the second anniversary of her farewell to Francis Ravenel, which was soon after her return from Brittany to Paris, she took from the depths of an old trunk the mementos of that time which seemed to her so far away. Such trifling things: a pine cross tied with blue ribbon; a grass ring which he had made for her once in the barley-field; a note or two; a book of collected poems, marked. Trifling things, indeed! but her heart throbbed with the sense of his presence as she held them in her hands.

In the next room Nora was clattering some tea things, making the plain, homely bustle that frequently keeps one sane. Out-of-doors it was one of Paris' divine gray days, with pinks and lavenders showing in the shadows; but neither the in-door noise nor the outside beauty held her. She was back in the Carolinas with her first love; there was the odor of pine and honeysuckle in the Paris air, a harvest moon in the sky.

"To forgive and forget and understand."

On the impulse of the moment she decided to write her story to the unknown with no names, telling the pain which haunted her always; the pain which she felt would be hers until the end. Having finished the narrative, she concluded:

"I am trying to make it very clear to you. You have been, you are, so kind. But I want you to know about me exactly as I am. The world would say that this man did not treat me well. He had faults; he had ignorances; we are none of us perfect; he was not a great man. But he was just as I would have him."

And, womanlike, she added a postscript:

"You send me too much money. Lessons in fencing, dancing, languages, music, cost a great deal. I have not been spending it all, although I have been helping an art student, who has almost starved himself to death in a room built on a roof, painting by candle-light.

"P.P.S.—Also a girl who tried to drown herself because she cannot sing, but she writes beautifully. I will send you one of her poems, to show you she is worth helping.

"P.P.P.S.—

Also

a

very

poor

rag-

picker

with, I think, twelve children. He looks even worse than this."

The routine of her life having been thoroughly established the preceding winter, she fell easily again into the old lines. Every day she lunched with Madame de Nemours. Sometimes, when engagements left them both free, they dined together in quite a stately manner in the high, old tapestry room, and once in a fortnight she was bidden to dinner with friends of this great lady —Bartand, the dramatist; President Arnot; or Prince Cassini, with his terrible vitality and schemes for universal betterment.

One morning she was disturbed at her studies by a card from the Countess, saying that Mrs.

Lennox was below and wished to see her. She had grown accustomed to the desire of strangers to be presented to her, for, as Dermott had told her, the news of her voice was already newspaper copy. In the drawing-room she found Madame de Nemours by the window talking animatedly, in her pleasant, low voice, to a lady, young and vivacious, wearing aggressive mourning.

"And this," the stranger cried, in a high, strong, musical voice, coming forward, "is the Miss Dulany of whom I have been hearing such wonderful things?" She waited for no response. "I have just been telling the Countess that I almost met you at Ravenel House, in Carolina, over two years ago. There was a house-party, and you refused to come."

Katrine flushed and turned pale again suddenly, as she realized that this was the Mrs. Lennox whom, by current gossip, Frank was to marry, and she lived over again in an instant, it seemed, the morning when she had met them riding together by the ford at Ravenel.

"I was ill, I remember," Katrine explained, recovering herself; "unfortunately ill, since I was prevented from meeting you." There was both consideration and compliment in her tone.

"Everything has changed a great deal since

then," Mrs. Lennox went on, "with me as well as with others. I lost my mother the following winter," she glanced at her mourning as she spoke, "and Mrs. Ravenel has been back to the old place but once, for a few weeks only. Mr. Ravenel (you remember Mr. Ravenel?) has gone in for all sorts of things since then. Nobody knows what came over him. Frank had never been one to tie himself down, but he is a regular New York business man now. He buys mines and sells them, and railroads and things." She laughed pleasantly. "It lacks definiteness, I can see. And Nick van Rensselaer! I have just been telling the Countess of him."

"I do not know Mr. van Rensselaer," said Katrine.

"What!" Mrs. Lennox cried, with amazement. "I thought you met him at Ravenel! I understood he heard you sing there, and it was because of it that he wanted to send you abroad to study."

"If it be Mr. van Rensselaer who has been so kind to me, I do not know it," Katrine answered, in no small degree annoyed by this enforced intimacy. "I have never seen him nor heard his name before in my life."

If Mrs. Lennox noted Katrine's manner she

was in nowise deterred by it from going deeper into the subject.

"Mrs. Ravenel told me," she continued, with excitement in her voice, "that Nick van Rensselaer came to her at Bar Harbor, and asked the use of her name if he furnished the means to send you abroad to study. He said that he was especially anxious to remain unknown in the matter. Mrs. Ravenel told me afterward that you had declined the offer because of having inherited a fortune yourself. But, of course, I thought you must have met him; in fact, I remember that Frank said he thought so, too By-the-way," she went on, rising to go, "he is coming over soon; Mr. Ravenel, I mean." She looked conscious for a second, as though preferring to keep something back, and then finished: "He will, of course, call while he is here?"

"He may be so kind," Katrine answered, suavely.

"Good-bye," Mrs. Lennox said, holding out a slim, black-gloved hand first to the Countess and then to Katrine. "I hope your studies will let you come to me soon. I hear you are to make your début in the spring."

Katrine laughed. "That will be as Josef says."

"Good-bye again."

After Mrs. Lennox had left the room, Katrine and the Countess looked at each other with questioning in the eyes of each.

"You lived at a place called Ravenel," Madame de Nemours asked, "and never told me?"

"I did not think the name one you would care to hear," Katrine answered.

"Ah, you so sweet thing!" the Countess cried, impulsively, putting her hand on the girl's cheek. "You were right. There are probably thousands of Ravenels in America unconnected with my unfortunate life."

But Katrine, who had had her own surprises in the interview, inquired, "Why did Mrs. Lennox, who is very beautiful, very wealthy, and of the monde, take so much trouble to come here to tell me of a Mr. van Rensselaer?"

"I didn't think she came for that alone," answered the Countess. "I thought she wanted you to know that Monsieur Ravenel was coming over to visit her."

Naturally, a marked change in Katrine's attitude toward her unknown benefactor followed this talk with Anne Lennox. She had become accustomed to think of "The Dear Unknown" as a lady, old and beneficent. The new idea was

startling. Thinking it over, she became convinced of the extreme unlikelihood that two people should have become so greatly interested in her voice at exactly the same time, and her conclusions led to believing that Mrs. Lennox had probably given her a true version of the affair. But if Nicholas van Rensselaer were her patron, instead of some white-haired old lady down in Leeds or Kent or Surrey, as she had imagined, her last letter must inevitably have told him, who had spent so much time in North Carolina, of her love for Francis Ravenel.

The obviously honest thing to do was to write to Mr. van Rensselaer immediately, to let him know that without effort or curiosity on her part his identity had been revealed to her.

Her letter to him was short to abruptness. She stated briefly the manner in which the information had come to her as well as her regret that his wish to remain unknown had been thwarted. She hoped that her voice would fulfill all the promise he thought it gave two years back; referred to the personal nature of her last letter; spoke of her desire to repay in full the money part of her obligation to him, realizing that the kind thought could never be repaid in

this world, and signed herself his "grateful Katrine Dulany."

In a fortnight the answer came:

My dear Miss Dulany,—Your letter reached me but a few minutes ago, and I am feeling, since its arrival, like the ass that wore the lion's skin. Mrs. Lennox was entirely wrong in her statements. It is true that I proposed the arrangement, which she told you of, to Mrs. Ravenel, but that dear lady wrote me within the week that I was too late in my offer, and that another believer in your gift had anticipated the pleasure I had promised myself in helping to give to the world a great voice.

I am extremely sorry that you are under no obligations to me. The confidences which you mention I assure you are entirely safe so far as I am concerned, for I never received a letter from you save the one which lies before me as I write.

I have heard that you will sing at the Josef recital in May. May I count upon you to write me a line as to the exact time, so that I may have the pleasure of hearing you?

If, meanwhile, there is any way that I can serve you, believe me that I shall be glad to do so, for I heard you sing "Ah! Fors e lui" one night, standing under the pines outside of your window, and my debt is great.

Sincerely,

Nicholas van Rensselaer.

And it was a curious thing to note that this letter, caused by the chatter of Anne Lennox, was the direct cause of Katrine's next meeting with Frank, a meeting which, but for this correspondence which led to an acquaintance with the Van Rensselaers, might never have taken place.

One evening, shortly after the receipt of this letter, Madame de Nemours told Katrine a piece of news for which she was not unprepared.

"By-the-way," she said, "Mrs. Lennox was here to-day. Mr. Ravenel is expected in Paris to-morrow. I have asked a party to dine with them on Friday."

Katrine had just said good-night to the Countess, and was standing in the doorway, candle in hand, with the light shining full on her face, as Madame de Nemours spoke; but she received the news with no change of face, no tremor of an eyelid. She felt it a loyalty to old love that the Countess should be forever unable to recognize in Frank the man whom they had discussed so often, namelessly; and of whom Madame de Nemours had such a slighting opinion. The strangest thing of all was that she had for this man's coming; this man for whose presence she had longed day and night for two years; the re-

membrance of whose words could thrill her and bring tears to her eyes or a smile to her lips; that for this man's coming, she had no thought save regret that he was to come, and determination not to meet him.

"I want to be sent away, Illustrious Master," she said, the following afternoon, to Josef, when the lesson was over, and they stood together looking at the sun going down over the gray mist of the Paris roofs. "I am not well, and there is some one coming to Madame de Nemours' on Friday whom I do not wish to meet."

Josef looked at her quickly.

"Mademoiselle Silence," he said, "I, who read voices as others read a printed page, understand. You had better see him."

Katrine flushed crimson, but changed suddenly to such a whiteness that Josef thought she would have fallen.

"Forgive me," he said, tenderly, putting his hand on her shoulder. "I am the surgeon with the knife, but my work is almost done. Let me tell you something. You have worked as I have never seen any one work before. I have not praised much, but I have seen. Ah, I know! Tones, little, big, staccato, breath, breath, breath! Over, and yet again over. And the thinking a

tone, which is the hardest of all. And the acting —to conceive what a character's voice should be; to understand that the timbre of Carmen's voice would not be that of Marguerite's; that the soul of the voice must change for each character. To slave, to slave, to slave, and suffer as you have done into the third year, is it not? None other can know the value of it all as I know it, and at the end what has the master done for you? Meet this man and you will find out. It is for my reward I am asking, for I, too, have done something."

Katrine took the hand of the great teacher and kissed it lovingly.

"Something?" she said. "You have done all."

"Not all; a part, a very little part," he returned. "But meet the man, my child, and you will see how much has been done by both of us. On Saturday morning you will come to me. You will say, 'Prophetic man, I am ashamed through all my being to have loved so slight a thing.' You will find you have outgrown him, and he will have only the weight of the Santa Claus, which children painlessly outgrow. And ever after you will have toward him a kindly mother-feeling, for that is woman's way toward their first loves."

Katrine shook her head. "I do not want to forget."

"No," said Josef, "you never have wanted to forget, and that has made it hard for me. You have a strange creed of your own. But sometimes, when I know beyond words that I have received a 'wireless' message from you over the roof-tops, I begin to believe you dangerous, Katrine Dulany. But your belief of 'mind-curing' people into being better has the seed of truth in it which makes so many new creeds dangerous. You can make yourself so great by fine thinking that the people who come in contact with you understand and are uplifted."

"It is a thing more subtle, Greatness!" Katrine answered.

"It is not a thing more subtle, Obstinacy!" he returned, with a laugh. "However, have your way! You are ordered to Fontainebleau tomorrow. Your voice is in rags, shall I say? You will stay for two weeks at the house of Madame Lomard. You will lie in the open and breathe much. And so, good-bye to you!"

XIX

A VISION OF THE PAST

ANNE LENNOX'S residence in Paris was more closely connected with Frank Ravenel than the world knew. In a letter which she had received from Mrs. Ravenel, after her illness at Bar Harbor, that comfort-loving old lady had written that she would like to go abroad for the winter if there could be found some homelike place to stay.

Mrs. Lennox had grown tired of New York, and she quickly devised a plan to take some of her servants with her, find a suitable establishment in Paris, and ask Mrs. Ravenel to make her a prolonged visit. That Francis would probably accompany his mother to Europe and visit her as frequently as business made it possible was not overlooked in Anne Lennox's calculations.

But Mrs. Ravenel, who was too fearful of her comfort to trust written descriptions, asked her son "to step over to Paris," as she jauntily put

it, and see Anne's home before she committed herself.

"She writes me," said Mrs. Ravenel, eying the invitation suspiciously, "that she has taken a house like a palace. I lived in a palace once in Venice. The walls were of marble, with moisture on them constantly, and there was but four feet of rug on a tiled floor forty feet square. When I asked for fire they brought me a china basket with three or four semi-hot coals in it, and placed it in the exact centre of the room where one was liable to trip over it. The experience cured me of 'dreaming to dwell in marble halls.' I want heat, electricity, and a large bath of my own."

According to his mother's wishes, Frank had written to Anne that business was bringing him to Paris, and that he would give himself the pleasure of calling upon her some time within the following fortnight.

In the stately old house, which she had taken on the Boulevard Haussmann, Anne awaited Frank's coming with more emotion than she acknowledged to herself. She knew that he had arrived in Paris two days before, had seen that he was at the Grand Club, and the day previous had received from him a note asking permission

to call at four. He had been more than deliberate in his attentions, a deliberation to which she had become accustomed. It was, in fact, part of his charm. Often, in past years, he had hurt her so much by his coldness that his coming brought a keener pleasure than the presence of a more ardent suitor might have done, if he could with any exactness be termed a suitor at all.

Long before her ill-assorted marriage had been dissolved by the death of her husband, Anne Lennox's name had been connected with that of Francis Ravenel. But it was one of the few affairs of his life which had caused no scandal, one which other women had slurred over with a laugh.

"Anne's all right, you know," they explained, "and really Frank and she would have been very well suited to each other if they could have married. At worst nothing but a flirtation; and who, knowing her husband, can blame her?" These were the excuses framed for Mrs. Lennox by her many friends. The death of her husband had brought the general belief that a wedding between Frank and herself would naturally follow. Nearly four years had elapsed, however, and marriage between them seemed no nearer than it had ever done.

Frank's present visit to Paris, Anne Lennox knew, with some bitterness, was a business one. He had made that disappointingly plain to her in his letter. But as she awaited his coming in a white crêpe gown, which made her seem so fair and young, she hoped the words might be spoken which would bring to her the desired end.

With all the love of which her worldly heart was capable, she had loved this man for years, for his wealth, his family, even for his reputed successes with women, which would give added distinction to the charms of the woman whom he finally selected for a wife.

After he had been announced she rose to greet him, and stood watching him as he came slowly through the great hall, noticing the hangings as he came. It was a slight thing, but a woman in love knows the value of such signs.

"When did you come?" she asked.

"Three days ago." He offered no excuse for his tardy attention, adding only, "You've a beautiful old place, Anne."

"You like it?" she asked. "I'm delighted. You are not easily pleased. But you should see the De Nemours' place. Whenever I come back after seeing it this place seems detestably new,

as if it were just varnished! It is with the Countess de Nemours that Miss Dulany lives."

She watched him with attentiveness.

"Yes!" he answered, in a tone which might either be asking or answering a question, adding: "The New York papers are heralding many complimentary things concerning her voice. Have you heard her sing?"

Anne shook her head. "She is hedged about like royalty. That dreadful Josef prescribes every minute of her day. It must be a great bore to live in the way she has done. I met her once, however. Do you know, Frank, she had never heard of Nick van Rensselaer, and when I told her he had wanted to send her abroad before her fortune came she seemed amazed. Of course, your mother denied the fact that it was Mr. van Rensselaer who enabled her to come; but I always believed it was he, didn't you?"

"You are complimenting mother's veracity," Frank answered, laughing. "If she said it was not Mr. van Rensselaer, as a dutiful son I am bound to believe it, am I not?"

"Doubtless," Anne answered, smiling. "By-the-way, Madame de Nemours has left with me an invitation for you to dine with her on Friday."

"Shall we hear Miss Dulany sing, do you suppose?" Frank asked, quietly, unimportantly.

"I don't know. She has never dined with us when I have been there. I believe she is allowed frivolities but once a fortnight. Perhaps—" But before she finished a maid entered with Madame de Nemours' card. "You can ask for yourself," Anne explained, glancing at the card. "Here is the Countess in person."

It had grown dark in the room, and Frank stood in the shadow as he was presented to the Countess, who had come with the hope of meeting him, for Katrine's sudden resolve to go to Fontainebleau had not deceived her at all. By that process of seemingly illogical reasoning by which women arrive accurately at facts, she had come to the conclusion that Katrine had gone away to avoid meeting either Anne Lennox or this Mr. Ravenel, and a far less brilliant woman than Madame de Nemours would have suspected Frank of being the man who had caused Katrine such pain in the past. That she had lived on his plantation, and that there must have been many opportunities for them to have been constantly together, unnoted in a place twenty miles from any dwelling, made the thing doubly sure. And so Madame de Nemours, by reason of her intuitions,

met Francis Ravenel upon the defensive for this girl whom she had learned to love so deeply.

"I am in despair," the Countess said, after the greetings had been exchanged. "Here am I giving a dinner to distinguished Americans," this with a little complimentary gesture toward both of them, "on Friday, and Katrine Dulany ordered off to Fontainebleau by that terrible Josef. 'You are not well!' said he. 'Go on such a day, on such a train, to such a place! Say this! Think this! Imagine this!' And the poor child went off yesterday for a month to Fontainebleau, afraid to disobey. Do you know, I am thinking," she went on, "of adopting this strange child, Katrine, legally, just to circumvent Josef? For that, and other reasons," she explained, laughing, "I am so sorry you are not to meet her, Mr. Ravenel."

"I have met Miss Dulany frequently," Frank answered. "In Carolina, three years ago. Every one there was interested in her voice."

"Yes," the Countess answered, "it will be like that always with her. If I tell you something," she said, the light dancing in her eyes as she spoke, "will you be very discreet about it? I am thinking of marrying Katrine to my nephew, the Duc de Launay. He doesn't know it, being

in Africa, but I am determined to be firm with both. Think of those splendid, great ways of hers! She should have been a duchess in the Middle Ages, when she could have dressed in long, brocaded stuffs and led armies or killed a king. You can see," she said, drawing her wraps about her, "I am not quite sane on the subject of this Irish child, and go before I become a regular bore. Good-bye, Mrs. Lennox; good-bye, Mr. Ravenel. I am so glad to have you both for Friday night."

She rose, and as she did so Frank came forward to assist her with her wraps. At sight of him, in the full light of the doorway, she drew back for an instant, clutched at a curtain, gave another quick look, and fell, with a white face, unconscious into Anne's supporting arms.

It was not long, however, before she recovered enough to be helped to her carriage; but this fainting was followed by a protracted illness, the Friday dinner was postponed indefinitely, and Katrine summoned hurriedly home from Fontainebleau.

Naturally, Anne Lennox called and brought Frank with her to make inquiries and to leave regrets. It was in this visit, as Frank stood well in the sunshine admiring the old house, that

Quantrelle, peering from his box, saw him, and with an oath fell back into the shadow as though hiding from an enemy. Peering from a crack in the door, he waited Frank's departure, and after the carriage had driven away, seized a hat and ran at a mad pace down the narrow street, upsetting children and dogs as he ran.

Josef protested impatiently that it was a badly chosen time for the Countess to be ill, speaking as though Madame de Nemours had personally selected it with criminal thoughtlessness of Katrine, whose début was close at hand; for despite his protests, the girl took the position of nurse, sitting up till all hours of the night, and neglecting her lessons if the Countess needed or desired her services.

The great lady herself, after the danger seemed passed, lay in silence day by day, neither questioning nor explaining. To Katrine, however, explanations were unnecessary, for she understood that to Madame de Nemours the sight of Frank had brought back, with terrible distinctness, that other Ravenel who had been summoned to his accounting years before. Just how much Madame de Nemours knew of Frank's attitude to Katrine at this time was never made clear, but

she clung to her adopted child with love and a new comprehension.

But no word passed between them at the time on the subject of either Ravenel, nor did these two great ladies again speak to each other on the subject of Francis Ravenel until the night of the Countess' death. But it was doubtless the bond in suffering, no less than her great love, which made the Countess write to Dermott, the first day of her convalescence, the letter which is set below:

"I am nearing the end, my dear Irish cousin, and would set the house in order before I go. What little I have (it is almost nothing, for the house goes back to the estate at my death and my income has never been large) I want to give to Katrine Dulany. I want her to have, in the old phrase, everything of which I die possessed. And of course I desire you to be the executor. Will you arrange the necessary papers and bring them with you when you come to hear her sing? And I'm hoping I may be still here to greet you and thank you once more for a lifetime of loyalty and devotion."

Sitting in his New York office, Dermott read the lines with a face saddened and gray. But the smile, so peculiarly his own, filled with

cynicism and humor, came to his lips at its close.

"Talk of justice!" he said. "Why, poetry can't touch this! Things always square themselves in the long run, though we may not live to see them do it, but this is one of the times when poetic justice itself got on the job."

Dermott answered this letter of Madame de Nemours in person as soon as business made it possible. Katrine, who understood from the Countess the significance of his coming, awaited him in the reception-room on the second floor. The curtains were drawn; a fitful fire made the figures in the tapestry advance and retreat; the candles in silver sconces lit up a misty Greuze over the mantel-shelf. A great bowl of white roses filled the room with fragrance, and Dermott thought, as he bent over Katrine's hand, that it was all but an exquisite setting for the girl herself.

Nearly a year had passed since their last meeting, and naturally Dermott expected some change in her. But Katrine was entirely unprepared for the change in Dermott. She had known but the one side of him in Carolina. On his previous visits to Paris, while grateful for his kindness, she was preoccupied and sad. And so,

of the serious-eyed man with the beautiful pallor and grave courtesy, she had scant remembrance.

On the instant of his coming, however, she recollected memories of the old days; recalled that underneath his bright and stagelike behavior there had ever been a certain constant attention, a sweeping glance, a quiet scrutiny of persons unaware of his observance, a memory of details and words and dates in some degree inhuman, and in the first hand-clasp she recognized the power she had not had the vision to see in the years before.

With both hands in his and her breath caught in her throat with gratitude, she said:

"If you think I'm going to try to thank you for all you've done for me here in Paris, you're mistaken, Dermott. I'm not." And then, with a quick catching of the breath: "I couldn't do it adequately, no matter how I tried. I know it was you who arranged for me to live here with Madame de Nemours; I know how you've been writing to Josef concerning my studies; I know how your kindness has followed me everywhere. That's why I can't thank you," she said, with dewy lashes and the deep note in her voice which made her speech ever seem like a caress.

"I've done little," Dermott answered. "I

hope, however, to do more." There was significance in his words, and Katrine looked at him quickly, to find him, however, gazing intently into the fire. "Tell me of yourself," he said; "all of it: the work, the ambitions, and the achievements. I have hungered at times for direct news of you. Already your fame is newspaper talk. You are happy?" he asked, abruptly.

"Happier than I thought I ever could be again," she answered, with an evasion.

"Once," he began, in a remote tone, "I was in Arabia with a native serving-man whom I tried to persuade to follow me on a shooting-trip in the desert. He said he couldn't go because he had a wife who wouldn't leave him. 'I made the mistake of beating her once,' he explained to me, 'and after a man has struck a woman once she'll stick to him forever.'"

If he expected angry speech of hurt remonstrance because of the too evident implication of the story, he was disappointed, for Katrine raised her eyes to his with sad frankness. "I think it speaks a truth, Dermott," she said. "Sometimes I wonder if there ever was a woman who loved the man who was kindest to her."

"It's unrecorded if it ever occurred," he an-

swered, moodily, taking another road in the conversation on the instant. "Madame de Nemours wrote me that you are to sing at Josef's recital next month."

"Yes, it is arranged."

"That will mean an opera engagement somewhere, will it not?"

Katrine laughed. "That's as may be. It depends on how I sing."

There was flattery in the answer. "It will mean Covent Garden if it depends on that," Dermott said.

"Thank you," she replied; and in the conventionality of the response she realized anew that the jesting-time was by between them and she had a man to reckon with.

"To-morrow," he said, "Josef has written me that, with your permission, I may hear you sing. Have I that permission, Katrine?"

"You have," she answered, noting the handsome line of the bent head and shoulders.

"To-morrow at two?"

"To-morrow at two. And then," said Katrine, "you will see for yourself what I've been doing, so there's no use discussing it, is there? Tell me of yourself and Barney. Does the newspaper work go well?"

"He's doing splendidly. He's more than making good."

"And the land you purchased in North Carolina! Do the eagles flourish on it?" she inquired.

"Not yet. But there's excellent clay there, and I've turned it into a brick factory for the present. The truth is, I needn't have bought that land. I suppose you've heard of the new railroad through Ravenel?" he asked.

"Something," she said, "but not definitely."

"They're building it on the other side from the 'Eagle Tract,'" he explained, smiling at the words. "Mr. Ravenel is practically putting the thing through himself. Do you know, Katrine," he continued, "I think I have underrated Ravenel. Sometimes in the last year, when I've seen him clearing obstacles from his path," and the way Dermott knew how to belittle a rival was plainly shown in the pitying tone he used here, "I've almost admired him. I have sometimes thought if circumstances had been different he might have even been something of a man."

But Katrine's utter honesty was a thing Dermott had not calculated upon. "Dermott," she said, "I have always tried to be frank with you, haven't I?"

"And at times," he broke in, with a smile, "have succeeded discouragingly well."

"I want to be so still. Madame de Nemours has told me the story of Ravenel."

McDermott waited, serene, inspiredly silent.

"But," Katrine went on, "I was a bit prepared for it. Almost the last thing father said to me before he died was that you were planning trouble for Mr. Ravenel."

McDermott waited still, but with a sterner look upon his keen and ardent face.

"Madame de Nemours has told me you need only a paper and a certain witness at Tours to carry out your purpose. Is it true?"

"It is."

"And that purpose is—" She hesitated.

"To see justice done to Madame de Nemours," he answered.

"It will mean that Mr. Ravenel has no right either to his home or his name?"

The pleading and protest in her voice did not escape Dermott as he answered:

"It will mean just that!"

"And nothing can move you from your purpose?"

"Nothing that I can now think of," he answered, adding with some vehemence: "Katrine

Dulany, is it that you know me so little? My cousin suffered much. She was deserted by a scoundrel while little more than a child. These things must be paid for. But if you think I'd do a crooked thing in business to settle a grudge or belittle a rival, you don't know me at all. There's none, not Ravenel himself, who will demand everything proven beyond doubt sooner than I. I'll take every point I can honestly, but the man who is not absolutely honest in business is a fool. Until he learns to be honest from the higher reason, he should be honest from selfishness. It pays. It's capital."

"Then you believe the cause just?"

"I believe that the present Ravenel's father married in America knowing that he had a living wife and child in France."

Katrine stood, hand-clasped, looking straight into Dermott's eyes. But what she saw was an old garden in Carolina, wind-blown pines, the scarlet creepers around an old bench, and a man with blanched face and restless eyes; what she heard, underneath Dermott's voice, were words from the past:

"*I might lie to you, but the thing that separates us is family pride, family pride. I am going away to-day, going because I do not dare to stay!*"

"Nothing else in life could hurt Mr. Ravenel as this thing will if proven," she said, at length.

"Naturally not," McDermott answered, succinctly; "but it is not proven yet," he added, in an impartial tone, adding, "I have not been able to find the witness I need."

Was it Katrine's imagination that made her think the door moved suddenly as by human agency? Had some of the servants been listening? She paused in her talk, and, looking into the hall, saw Quantrelle the Red pass quickly up the stairs with his daily flower for Madame de Nemours.

"And, believing that Ravenel did not belong to Mr. Ravenel," she continued, "you encouraged him to build the railroad?"

"I neither encouraged nor discouraged that enterprise," Dermott answered. "Fate steered, and did it well."

"And Mrs. Ravenel?" The name, as she spoke it, was a remonstrance.

"Mademoiselle Dulany," Dermott answered, "indeed you've a wrong conception of the matter. There is to be no stage play or newspaper work in the case. It will be quietly adjusted. The Ravenels are not people to permit any publicity. There will be compromises. Mrs. Ra-

venel, I hope, need never know the facts in the case. There is none need ever know, save Frank."

"You have never liked him, have you, Dermott?" Katrine asked, with directness.

"Never," Dermott answered, with a frankness matching her own.

"Why?"

"Faith, and there are three excellent reasons," Dermott returned, with something of his old manner: "He was himself; I was myself; and a third," he paused, with all the power of his personality in his great gray eyes, "a third," he repeated, "which I hope some time to explain to you at great length, little Katrine."

XX

THE INFLUENCE OF WORK

OF Francis Ravenel at this time much could be written. In the first months of his separation from Katrine, during all of the period of his mother's illness, he remained firm in the intention expressed in the unsent letter to visit her in Paris, ask her forgiveness, and make her a formal offer of marriage. But quick on the heels of his return to New York had followed the railroad business, to which Dermott McDermott's insolence had added new reason for making the enterprise a successful one.

But underneath the several postponements of visiting Katrine, the real cause of them all, in fact, was a fear of the well-merited rebuff which he might receive from her. He understood her pride well; and although he believed that she had not ceased to love him, he doubted if he held her respect, and many times, when instinct bade him go to her, he had recalled the pleading tones of her

voice in that last interview, when she had cried: "We may never meet again! Ah, please God, we may never meet again!"

Katrine's letters, which came to him with perfect regularity, kept him closely in touch with her daily life in Paris. He looked anxiously in them for any variation in her sentiments toward himself, but found none.

Reading one night in Firdousi, he discovered a passage which described Katrine so perfectly to him that he put a marker between the pages of the book, and kept it by his bedside to read at night as a pious person might have kept the confession of his faith.

"She was an elemental force," wrote the old poet, "and astonished me by her amount of life, when I saw her day after day radiating every instant redundant joy and grace on all around her. Though the bias of her nature was not to thought but to sympathy, yet was she so perfect in her own nature as to meet intellectual persons by the fulness of her heart, warming them by her sentiments, believing, as she did, that by dealing nobly with all, all would show themselves noble."

And there were sometimes bits of her letters which drove him wild with regret for what he had done.

"Is personal happiness, after all," she wrote once, "a very important thing? Nothing can ever make me suffer again as I have suffered, for I have learned to use a man's solace: work; work in which I can go far away from myself and be as impersonal as a problem in geometry. But I ask myself, Is that what was intended? Sometimes I seem to touch the edge of the knowledge that it is (perhaps) greater to be a sad, little, suffering, incompetent mother, than to be the person which trouble and music have made of me."

But in his self-abasement Frank failed to take into the accounting the stupendous effect which the New York influences and the handling of great affairs had had upon his own character. Day by day he had learned more plainly the lessons of responsibility, of continued and concentrated action, and even McDermott himself could not use Napoleon's great question, "What has he done?" more meaningly than Frank himself did now.

But with this new manhood came a finer comprehension of his baseness to Katrine, and an emphasized doubt as to whether she ever could forgive the miserable selfishness which he had displayed.

In his visits between the States and England (he made three during Katrine's stay in Paris, be-

sides the one in which he had met the Countess de Nemours) he went from one side of the question to the other in his thinking, wanting to visit Katrine, but realizing to the full that Mademoiselle Dulany, a singer to the world, or Katrine, adopted daughter of the Countess de Nemours, and a possible duchess, were worlds removed from the little Irish girl who had loved him in the Carolina woods. Fontainebleau! Fontainebleau! Since the day the Countess had told him of Katrine's being there, the name repeated itself in his head like a song. He remembered the silence of the great trees, the nightingales at dusk among them, and dreamed of a day with Katrine there, hearing her quaint humor, her daring speeches, her tenderness, her selfless view of life, of herself, of everything in all the world save him.

At the Christmas-time of Katrine's last year in Paris, he received a quaint illumination with the following note of explanation:

My dear Unknown Friend,—I have thought this out and printed it, too. It is not very well done, but I have tried to make it sincere. Of course I got the idea of making prayers for myself from R. L. S.

I am sending it to you with a heart full of hope that your Christmas may be a merry one.

Affectionately, Katrine Dulany.

He read and reread the printed lines, and finally had them framed and hung by his bedside, where they were the first thing upon which his eyes rested in the morning:

"Grant me the ability to do some one thing well.

"Give me sympathy for the suffering of others which has been brought to them by their own acts.

"Grant that I may have courage for the weak and the friendship of those who demand the best of my nature.

"Remove all doubts from me that there will be ultimate peace and happiness for every one.

"Let fear of the consequences of a right act be far from me. Let me forget the words expediency, convention, and reward.

"Grant me largeness of judgment, and silence for all weakness, especially that of woman.

"And give me, each day, my daily work, with rest at night under some friendly stars."

* * * * * * *

Early in April, after the lonesomest winter of his life, he received the following letter from his mother, who was still in Paris with Anne Lennox:

My dear, dear Child,—I have been going about a great deal, meeting old friends and making some new ones, which accounts for my not having written you last week. Anne's house is like a Union Station for

repose and solitude. She has people in to luncheon and dinner and tea, and I suspect even for the *café au lait* in the mornings. I enjoy it, however. One is seldom bored, though frequently exhausted. Why I am writing this dull introduction I cannot say, for I have more important things to tell.

I have met Katrine Dulany.

Anne and I went to the Countess de Nemours' reception on Friday night. We were all in a whirl of unfinished sentences when Miss Dulany entered. I wish you might have seen her, as she came toward us! Of course she was a very pretty child in North Carolina, but she has developed into something really remarkable. She wore white, décolleté, with her hair Madonna-wise. And she has such distinction! Such repose! Truly, Frank, she came in so quietly that she made every one else seem to enter on horseback.

Coming directly toward me, she said: "Perhaps you do not remember me, Mrs. Ravenel! I am Katrine Dulany. My father was overseer of your plantation, in North Carolina, for nearly three years." It was as though Mary Queen of Scots had come to life and asked me if I remembered when she was my parlor-maid!

And she stayed and talked to me with sweetest deference and an appeal in her eyes, and I went home quite exalted to think this much-desired person had singled me out for such marked attention.

But during the night (and oh, my little, little boy! you will forgive me if what I write hurts you, won't you?)

I awoke suddenly, and it seemed that everything was clear to me. I recalled your story of loving the woman whom you didn't think it right for you to marry, of your inexplicable stay at Ravenel through an entire summer, your depression afterward, and your sudden plunge into business. I couldn't help putting these things together and believing that this little Irish girl was the woman in the case.

But if you don't want me to know, I *won't* know. I never knew anything you didn't want me to. That's a mother's way. And don't say a word about the matter to me unless you care to. Believe me, boy of my heart, I will respect your silence.

It is three months since you have been here. Miss Dulany sings on the 23d. Can't you come over? Every one is going, and we have taken a box. Do come.

MOTHER.

Even to his mother Frank could not bring himself to mention Katrine's name, and he avoided all explanations by cabling his reply:

Will arrive in Paris on the 20th.—F. R.

XXI

THE NIGHT OF KATRINE'S DÉBUT

THE yearly recital of Josef's pupils is an event to which Paris looks forward with interest, for the great teacher makes of it always an artistic triumph. That year there was more than usual excitement over the event, because of the first appearance in public of Mademoiselle Dulany, whose voice had been enthusiastically written of by every critic whom Josef had permitted to hear her sing. Two of the greatest singers of the world, old pupils of Josef, had been bidden to sing with her. Campanali and Rigard, whose sonorous bass tones have thrilled two continents, came gladly at the bidding of their old master, to whom they owed so much. The opera was "Faust." The house was packed from pit to dome, with seats in the aisles, and many great people.

The Countess, trembling with excitement, had with her in her box her old friends the Townes,

from London, for the event. In the next box the Duc d'Aumale and a party of club men were making bets about the success of the evening. In the next sat Francis Ravenel, with his mother and Anne Lennox. He was more excited than he had believed it possible for him to be over anything in life. The lights, the chatter of the gay throng, the moving of the people in their visiting from place to place, the tuning of the instruments, jarred upon his nerves frightfully and heightened the tension at which he was. Outwardly, however, he appeared as unmoved as if sitting alone at the club. His mother and Anne were recognizing many acquaintances in the audience, and there was a constant procession of men coming to the box to pay their respects. With every one the topic was La Dulany. "Would she have stage fright?" Josef said not. "Will she be as beautiful as rumor has said?" "It is a great undertaking for an absolutely unknown débutante to sing with Campanali, who will, nay, must, naturally take all the honors."

Meanwhile, Katrine, in her little white room at the Countess de Nemours', had just written:

DEAR UNKNOWN,—I have shut every one out of my room and shall see them no more until afterward. Can

I do it? I have prayed God, who knows how I have suffered and worked and despaired and desired, to help me now. I have asked Him to remember what I have tried to do, to remember my self-denials, my surrender, my lonesome life, my broken heart, and give it me to do this one thing well.

They will all be there, all those people who have heard of me, and Josef. Ah, for his sake, too, I have prayed to do greatly, inspiredly, the thing he would have me do! And *he* will be there, too, I am told. He has crossed the ocean to hear me sing. Oh, dear God, just once, if never again, let him know me through my voice, know that I forgive and forget and understand!

The carriage is ready. Good-bye, dear, dear room, dear old books, dear old scores! Good-bye, Dear Unknown!

It is the last time I can write you of my hopes to be great. To-morrow you will know what I have done. But whether I go to success or failure, I kiss you with my heart full of love and gratitude, and so—good-bye!

KATRINE.

* * * * * * *

"There is Josef now; look, Mrs. Ravenel!" Mrs. Lennox cried, pointing to a man who had just entered the stage box. "The man with the iron-gray hair. And the eyes! Did you ever see such eyes? And who is that with him? Great Heavens," she exclaimed, "it is that pervasive

Irishman who was down in North Carolina, Dermott McDermott!"

Josef, pale as a statue, had taken a place in the shadow of the box, back from the reach of opera-glasses. His hands trembled, and at times his lips twitched backward, as one who has lost control through too long a strain.

"Do look out for him," Katrine had said to Dermott, the night before, between tears and a smile. "I can get through it all right, but I am fearful it may kill Josef. He takes me very seriously, you know."

A heavy knocking came. The leader took his place. The overture began, and when the curtain rose Campanali received the genuine ovation which was his due. At the conclusion of that great duet, "Be Mine the Delight," there was the vision of Marguerite at the spinning-wheel, and, after three years, Francis Ravenel saw Katrine, but in a blurred vision with fold upon fold of gauze between them. Finally the soldiers and maidens disappeared, and there came an expectant hush. One heard *now!* The pause was marked, intentional, before there came toward the footlights, in their most relentless glare, a girl with gladness and joy in her very walk. Neither a heavy German peasant girl

nor a French soubrette. No dreary, timid, *mädchen*, but a glad young soul conscious of nothing save joy, with the beauty in her face of youth and power as she looked at the gay throng of the fair. Then, with the gaze of the entire house upon her, her eyes encountered those of Faust. There was no start of surprise, but, as though drawn to him by a law beyond control, her eyes rested in his, and with no gesture, without a note sung, with nothing but a change in expression, one understood great love had come to her, the first love of a woman, which is never lived over nor forgotten.

And Francis Ravenel, sitting back of the others in the box, recalled that look and drew behind the curtains. In memory, soft arms were round his throat as a voice, the same, yet not the same, sang:

> "No signor, not a lady am I,
> Nor yet a beauty,
> And do not need an arm
> To guide me on my way."

A golden voice, with tones so breathed they had the liquidness of the bluebird's call, as Paris held its breath before the beauty and wonder of it; a voice which Frank remembered amid the

pine and honeysuckle underneath the night blue of the Carolinas, saying:

"God keep you always just as you are, beloved."

From the first scene to the clear end, when, in the divine trio, Campanali, Rigard, and Katrine caught fire from each other and went mad together, in that great, strong music where right triumphs, as the song climbs higher and higher in its great insistence, it was such triumph as no first performance had been in the memory of our generation, a success that admitted no cavilling or question, a success indisputable and unparalleled, and before the performance was ended the papers were chronicling, for the ends of the earth, that a world star had arisen in the firmament of song.

McDermott's face was an open book for all who cared to read. The one woman on earth for him was triumphing, and his thoughts were all for her, and Master Josef saw and noted even in his excitement and trembling.

Frank, too, gloried in Katrine's success, but underneath the pleasure there was a senseless jealousy, a resentment of the position in which it placed her to him. And the conduct of Dermott

McDermott during the evening was another bitter morsel for his palate; for the Irishman carried an air of ownership of everything, even of Josef; gave an appraising and managerial attention to the audience; and bowed to Katrine, when she smiled at him over a huge bunch of green orchids with an Irish flag in the ribbons, with such an air of proprietorship that it made the time scarcely endurable to Frank. But he played the game by a masterly method, and drew nearer to Anne, looking into her eyes with the devotion which he knew so well how to assume, despising himself as he did so. But after the last *brava* had been given and he had put his mother into the brougham, saying, abruptly, that he preferred to walk, his heart and head came to an unexpected encounter. He stood alone, unnoting the passers-by, oblivious of the superfluous praise of Katrine's voice which he heard in the broken talk, looking into the distant sky at the two great towers of Notre Dame.

It was not far to the De Nemours' house. Although very late, it would doubtless be filled with friends congratulating Katrine, and under the circumstances, he reasoned, there could seem no precipitancy in calling immediately to offer congratulations.

He found the house a blaze of light, with servants going back and forth with arms full of flowers. In front there were many carriages and fiacres. By the entrance arch were several newspaper men, one of whom spoke Frank's name as he passed. Everywhere there was an air of bustle and disorder. On the second floor he saw lights being carried from one room to another, as though hurried preparations were being made.

Giving his card to the French servant, who had ushered him with an important and excited manner into a small reception-room, he waited. His heart throbbed like a school-boy's with his first love. In a minute he would see her, would hold her hand. In his pocket he carried a letter, one of Katrine's many letters, to "The Dear Unknown."

"I have not forgotten this old love," she had written, "I shall never forget. I never close my eyes without thinking of him nor without a prayer for him upon my lips."

Suddenly there came a laugh, a jolly, musical sound of real mirth, and he heard Dermott's voice dominating and directing on the upper floor. Immediately after there came a silence, and then, from the turn in the stairs, he heard the same voice, with a touch of insolence, speak-

ing to the servant to whom he had given the card:

"Say to Mr. Ravenel that Mademoiselle Dulany regrets that it is impossible for her to see him." And then, with a dramatic note, "Tell him," the Irishman added, "she leaves within an hour to sing before the Queen."

XXII

FRANK AND KATRINE MEET AT THE VAN RENSSELAER'S

IN the three months which followed Katrine's great success, Frank heard of her constantly, always with a curious self-belittling and a reviewing of his own conduct, fine in its self-depreciation. He had betrayed the great unspoken trust of the finest human being he had ever known, and afterward dallied, for fear of rebuff to his vanity, from squaring the account as well as he could by giving her a chance to refuse him openly. He felt that he could never again be to her what he had been. Three years of such work as she had done would change her ideals much.

He reflected, too, upon the changes in himself, one of the greatest being his recognition of the sound virtues of Dermott McDermott. There had been times when circumvention by this son of Erin had been so masterly, so deft, so unexpected that Frank had felt like extend-

ing a congratulating hand. Once he had actually laughed aloud, at a board meeting, over an election which McDermott had dictated. But these things assumed a new importance when he thought of Dermott's love for Katrine, for the queer Celtic genius was singularly unattuned to failure in anything, and never, in any matter save that of the railroad, could Frank claim a complete victory. And those who believed the railroad issue still unsettled were not wanting.

Soon after the Paris visit, Frank heard, through Anne Lennox, of the death of Madame de Nemours. The letter reiterated, as well, that Katrine had sung to England's good old Queen. Before this confirmation Frank had doubted this statement as one of the outputs of Dermott's oriental imagination.

In August, having had no letter from Katrine or his mother for over a month, he accepted Nick van Rensselaer's invitation to Waring-on-the-Sea, with no knowledge whatever as to the other members of the party. As he was driven up the carriageway, under great New England pines, and saw the shining sea and the far-off Magnolia hills, he thought, for the first time, of other guests who would probably be there, and recalled with annoyance how one meets the same people every-

where. After he had dressed for dinner, he stood looking from the balcony of his room into the twilight thinking of Katrine, and wondering why her monthly letter had not arrived.

At the foot of the stairs he encountered Sally Porter, whom he had not met since she had been his mother's guest at Ravenel, three years before.

"Why, Frank Ravenel!" she cried, at sight of him. "I thought you were in—where did we hear he was, mother?"

"Several places, my dear," her mother responded, placidly.

"Java, Japan, or Jupiter," Nick van Rensselaer broke in, coming forward with outstretched hand. "How are you, old man?"

As Frank returned the grip he looked over Nick's shoulder to a merry group which stood near the entrance to the music-room, and his amazed eyes rested upon Katrine Dulany. A new Katrine, yet still the old. She wore white lace. Her black hair was parted and rippled over the ears into a low coil. There was even more the look of an August peach to her than he remembered: dusky pink with decided yellow in the curve of her chin, as he had once laughingly asserted. But the softness and uplifted expression of the misty blue eyes were the same,

and added to all was the repose of manner which comes only from the consciousness of power or of sorrows lived beyond.

For a moment he seemed unable to make any effort to go to her, and then came to him an intense consciousness of himself, of her, and their mutual past. As their eyes met, however, he discovered that whatever embarrassment existed was his own, for Katrine saw him, seemed to make sure that her eyes did not deceive her, and with a glad smile stretched both hands toward him.

"Why, it's Mr. Ravenel!" she cried.

Her eyes rested in his as she spoke. "It has been three, oh, so many years, since we have met," she began, with a smile.

"Don't," he answered, holding her hands. "It was only yesterday."

"Three yesterdays," she said, with the old "make-believe" look in her eyes. "Half a week. Somehow it seems longer, doesn't it?"

"I was sorry to miss seeing you in Paris last May," Frank said. "I wanted so much to congratulate you; but congratulations would have been an old story even at that time."

"Everything was in such a ferment the night you called," she explained. "Josef was quite

beside himself, and I was rushing off somewhere, I remember, and I didn't get the card until afterward," again the perfectly frank, sweet look, "but I recall that it gave me pleasure to know you came."

At dinner Francis found, with some annoyance, that he was placed between Mrs. Dysart and Miss Porter, at the remote end of the table from Katrine, whom he could see at Nick van Rensselaer's right, showing her dimples and the flash of white teeth and scarlet lips as she told some story of her own.

He noted how easily she was first, so sure of herself and her power, but with a marked deference to the women as well as to the men who courted her attention so openly. "Such considered conduct!" he commented to himself, approvingly.

No chance came to him to talk to Katrine again that night, but, analytical as he was of woman, he could discern no smallest sign that it was by any design of hers, nor that she noted his presence more than that of another. She neither avoided nor sought his glance, and it was not until midnight that he had even a word alone with her.

"I am going to sing," she said, turning with

a pretty smile toward a group in which he was standing.

In a minute he came forward and led her to the piano. "'The Serenade,'" he said.

Her eyes gleamed through the long lashes as she looked away from him.

"Ah," she answered, "I seem to have outgrown it!"

XXIII

AN INTERRUPTED CONFESSION

ON the fourth day, because of a nasty twist at polo, the doctor ordered Frank to rest. Coaching and golf had left the house deserted as he lay on the couch in the second hall, thinking of Katrine's masterly deftness in avoiding him.

"I have never known another woman who could have done it so well," he thought. "She seems to have neither resentment nor remembrance. It is as though the whole affair had never been. I wonder—"

The noise of a door opening at the far end of the corridor disturbed his reflections, and as though walking into his thought, Katrine came down the hall.

She wore a house-gown of pale blue, low in the neck, with long, flowing sleeves. Under her arm she carried a music-score in regular school-girl fashion, and she was humming to herself as she came.

Frank lay perfectly still; his eyes closed as she approached him.

"I am not going to bid you a good-morning, seeing that I am obliged by doctor's orders to do it in this position. It doesn't seem respectful," he explained.

The surprise, the dimples, the gay, low laugh seemed such a part of her as she paused beside his couch.

"You are ill?" she asked. "Or," with a twinkle of the wide eyes, "didn't you want to go on the coaching-party?"

"I took a fall at polo yesterday. I was not at dinner last night. I am flattered at the way you have dwelt upon my absence."

"I dined at the Crosbys' or I might have spent a sleepless night concerning it. There were a great many people there. Your friend, Dermott McDermott, for one. He is coming here to-day." Her face was illumined by the spirit of teasing as she spoke. "Only," she went on, with a sweet and instant sympathy, "I am hoping you are not badly hurt or suffering."

"There is nothing, absolutely nothing, the matter, except the doctor. He is all broken up over the accident, and says I must lie here or some-

where for two or three days to cure a wrench in my back which I didn't have."

Katrine laughed as she turned to go.

"I was intending to study some," she said, looking down at her music. "Will it annoy you?"

A quick, amused smile came to his face at the question, and he looked up with eyes full of laughter as he answered:

"Certainly, I am naturally unappreciative of music."

"I didn't mean that," Katrine explained, smiling back at him as she went along the corridor.

"Miss Dulany!" he called.

She turned toward him, her face waiting and expectant.

"As the German girl said in *Rudder Grange*, 'It is very loneful here.'"

"You mean," she asked, "that you would like to have me stay with you?"

"Nobody on earth could have stated my wish more accurately," he answered, in a merry, impersonal tone, as though addressing some imaginary third person.

She came back to him, drawing a low wicker chair near the couch and putting her music on

the floor beside her. "I shall be glad to stay if you want me to. Shall we talk?" And here she took up the books he had put beside him for amusement. "Balzac, Daudet." She made a little disapproving gesture.

"You do not care for them?" he asked.

"They are not for me, those horrible realist folk. I like books where things fall as they should rather than as they do; and the poetry where beautiful things happen. Things as they aren't are what I care for in literature."

He laughed. "We won't read," he said, "and *I* sha'n't talk. You must. All about yourself, the wonderful things that you have been living and achieving. You will tell it all in just your own way, full of quick pauses and sentences finished by funny little gestures."

This was dangerous walking, and he felt it on the instant.

But the Irish of the girl, the instinct to make a story, to entertain, came at his demanding, bringing the old gleam back to her eyes.

"Ah!" she said, deprecatingly. "The tale of me! It would bore you, would it not? It is just full of Josef and work and the Countess and Father Menalis and a few great names, and then more work, with a little more Josef," she added,

with a smile. And then dropping into the warm, sweet, intimate tones he remembered so well, she said, simply, "It was hard, but glorious in a way, too," she added, after a moment's thinking, "every morning to awaken with the thought of something most important to do; work which one loves, lessons with this great, great soul who knows why art is! The languages for one's art, the fencing for one's art, the eating, breathing, dancing, thinking, living for one's art! With Josef's eternal 'Think it over! Think it over!' and Paris with all of its beautiful past! And there were lonesome days, too, when I felt I could never do it, with sleepless nights of discouragements. Ah," she said, the scarlet coming to her cheeks, "I have lived! It's a great thing to say that, isn't it? But I have lived! One day, I remember, Josef was all fussed up. It was a horror of a day, and he told me that maybe I would never sing, that my temperament might not do, and I went home with thoughts of suicide and didn't go back to him for nearly a week. Then he sent for me. 'Where have you been?' he demanded, fiercely. 'I am going to give it all up,' I answered. And he took me by the shoulders. 'My God!' he cried, 'with a genius like yours, *could* you give it up?' 'But you said the last time I was here—'

I began. 'Bah!' he interrupted, putting his hand on my shoulder, 'you can't believe a word I say. I am a great liar.' And we both cried a little, although, even then, he kept telling me how bad crying was for the voice, and we did some Pagliacci together, just as if nothing had happened."

"It must have been a wonderful life," Francis said, a great appreciation in his voice.

"It was; I miss it here—some, although people are so kind. And you?" she demanded. "Tell me about yourself."

"There is nothing to tell. Things are just the same with me. I suppose they will never be much different."

"Mrs. Lennox told me last winter that you were doing quite wonderful things in business."

He smiled, but made no explanation. "Are your engagements arranged as yet, Katrine?" he asked.

"It is probable that I shall sing in St. Petersburg first. It is what I want most if I sing in public next winter at all."

There was a pause.

"You have not changed so much as I had thought," he said, at length.

"More than I show, I am afraid," she answered.

"Oh," he returned, "even I can discern some

changes. You are more, if I wanted to be subtly flattering, I should say, you are more beautiful, more of the world in appearance, and I know what the Countess meant when she said you were becoming 'epic, grand, and homicidal,' or something like that."

"How horrible!" she laughed.

"Not at all, only not as I remembered you." He spoke the words slowly, against his will and his judgment, and in defiance of taste or conduct, looking up as he did so into eyes which from their first glance, over three years before in the woods in North Carolina, had been able to stir him as no other eyes had ever done. And it seemed to him as though in that look all conventions were dropped between them. "You were kind to me then, Katrine."

She looked at him steadily, as a child might have done, with no shrinking in her glance, with neither anger nor shame. "And you?" she asked, wistfully. "Were you very kind to me?"

"I was not. God!" he said, "if you could only know how I have suffered for the way I acted! To feel such shame as I have felt! Oh," he cried, "nobody on earth could make me talk this way but you! There was always between us

a curious understanding, wasn't there, Katrine, even apart from the other?" He finished vaguely.

"I knew you would suffer. I was sorry for that," she answered, gravely.

"Were you, truly? Were you big enough for that?"

"Well," and the sad smile with which the Irish so often speak of personal grief came to her lips, "you see, I loved you. And when one loves one wishes for happiness for the one beloved, does one not? Yes," she said, "I was honestly sorry to think that you would have even a regret. I would have taken all the sorrow if I could."

"You loved me then?" His head was gone. He remembered only the sweetness of her presence and the nearness of her. "You did love me then, Katrine?"

She rose suddenly as though to leave him.

"Don't go," he said, reaching his hand toward her with pleading in his tone.

She reseated herself, her face exquisitely pale. "Ah," she said, "you know I loved you! I was so young, and it was all so terrible to me! Please God, you may never suffer as I did! I have lain awake night after night praying to die, or waking with dread at the knowledge that as soon as

consciousness came the horrible pain would return with it, and there came the resentment to the great God for my birth, as though that could make any real difference. But it was good for me. The very best thing in all the world. Nothing else could ever have taught me as it did."

"Katrine!" he cried, and, the doctor's orders forgotten, he sat up and leaned toward her, "believe me, I have waited all these years to see you, to talk with you! But unless two people are entirely honest, I knew the thing would be impossible. I thought you would forgive me, would understand as you grew older."

"I understood then," she interrupted. "My whole life had trained me to understand. I was not in the least critical of you. I am not now. You followed your birth and your training. You had been taught no self-control. Women had spoiled you. You had never had to consider others. I want to be perfectly frank with you about it all. I never deceived you in word, tone, or look. I shall not begin now. You were my ideal man in everything. You know," she paused, an amused smile upon her lips and her lids lowered, "you know I thought Henry of Agincourt, Wolfe Tone, and Robert Bruce must

have been like you, and I was grateful to the good God for letting me live in your time and country."

She ceased speaking, and her eyes rested upon the far-away sea with the remembering tenderness a woman might give to an old plaything of childhood before she continued:

"It was from Josef, of course, that I had most help, always belittling this affair, always trying to make me forget in work. I was too tired at night to grieve; I had to sleep. 'Women,' he said, 'coddle their griefs! They revel in hopeless passion! They nurse it! Remember,' he said, 'there are two ways to forget: weeping and making swings.' Well," she finished, "he taught me to make swings."

"And you have forgotten?" Francis asked, standing beside her, magnetic, compelling, taken out of himself.

Memories were drawing them together. Remembered kisses, words, spoken lips to lips, and that elemental sweet attraction of man for woman, which should be ranked with the other great elemental things like fire, water, earth, and air. Katrine rose also, and they stood looking into each other's eyes.

"No," she answered, quite steadily, "I have not forgotten. I never shall forget. I would

give my life to feel that you are the man I once believed you to be, the man I believe you could have been."

"Will you be frank with me, Katrine?" he demanded.

"Have I ever been anything else?" she questioned, in return.

"You have avoided me since you came."

"Yes, only I hope not noticeably."

"No, it was well done, but why?"

"Can you ask?"

"I do ask."

"I did not want ever to see you again nor to talk to you as we are talking now."

"Answer me, Katrine!" he cried, bending toward her. "Answer me! Why did you never want to see me again?"

There still was the look in her eyes of sweetest frankness as she answered: "There were many reasons before I saw you that first night why I should never wish to see you again. But after that there was only one — one — one that filled my mind. I am afraid."

"Afraid!" he repeated, with the man's look of the chase in his eye, "afraid of what, Katrine?"

She had moved by the fireplace, and with a hand on the chimney-shelf turned her eyes to

meet his own, with the clear, unafraid look in them of the olden times.

"When I first saw you here, the night I sang, I became afraid you were a man whom I had simply overestimated in the past because of my youth. I have avoided you ever since for fear I should find it to be true. I am afraid you are a man who is simply 'not worth while.'" The words were spoken softly, even with a certain odd tenderness, but they struck Francis Ravenel like a blow in the face, and he set his lips, as a man does in physical suffering.

"I think it is just," he said, at length. "I think that describes me as I am: a man who is not worth while. Only, you see, Katrine, I was not prepared to hear the truth from you." He grew white as he spoke. "In all of your letters you spoke so divinely of that old-time love."

For an instant she regarded him with startled attention, her eyebrows drawn together, both hands brought suddenly to her throat.

"My letters," she repeated, "my letters!" And then, her quick intuition having told her all, "How could you do it? Oh, how could you do it?" she cried, the tears in her eyes and the quick sobs choking her speech. "It was you who sent me abroad to study! It is you to

whom I am indebted for all: Josef, the Countess, my voice! Ah, you let a girl write her heart out to you, to flatter your— Oh, forgive me!" choking with the sobs which had become continuous, "forgive me!" she cried, as she laid her head on her arms by the corner of the chimney. "Forgive me!" she repeated. "I said once (you will remember, I wrote it, too) that I would try never to criticise you by word or thought. I want to be true to that, even *now*. Only," she said, pressing her hand over her heart, "I hurt so! The pain makes me say things I would rather not say. Oh, I wonder if another man in all the world ever hurt a woman's pride as you have hurt mine!"

"Katrine," Frank said, "God knows I never intended to tell you! There was always the thought in my mind that you should never know, but you hurt me so, I forgot. Oh, Katrine, forgive me!"

"I *am* grateful," she interrupted, in her hurried, generous way, "grateful for the kind thought for me; but I am angry, too, so angry that I don't dare trust myself," she smiled through her tears, the funny, heart-breaking smile. She gathered up her music. "Goodbye," she said, "I shall try to go away in the

morning." And with no offer of handshaking she passed him, and he heard her softly close and lock the door of her sitting-room.

He knew she would keep her word, knew that the morning would take her from him, and the pain of hurt pride and wounded love goading him on, he covered the distance to the bolted door.

"Katrine!" he called.

Within he heard the noise of sobbing, of quick breaths choked with pain.

"Katrine Dulany!" he repeated, with tenderness.

"Yes!" she answered from within.

"I want to speak to you."

There was no response.

"I must speak to you, Katrine."

He waited, fearing her new contempt, until the silence became unendurable.

"Katrine," he said, "you will either come out or I will come in."

There was another silence before there came, at the end of the lower corridor, a great commotion of quick orders given and executed, of luggage being placed, and through it all a low singing as of one much at home. It would be an awkward situation, he thought, for the servants to find him clamoring at Miss Dulany's

door, and as he moved toward the window the singing grew nearer, breaking into a loud voice at the top of the steps,

"War dogs tattered and gray,
Gnawing a naked bone,
Fighting in every clime
Every cause but our own,"

and Dermott the jaunty, the extremely elegant, in black riding-clothes, with the jewelled crop of North Carolina days, stood in the afternoon sunlight at the head of the great stairs.

"Ah, Ravenel," he cried, "I have been staying at the Crosbys', and heard but last night from Miss Dulany that you were here! I accepted the invitation Van Rensselaer hadn't yet given me to ride over and stay awhile. I am," and here he had the superb impudence to adjust an eyeglass for a complete survey of Frank, "I am interested in your doings just now, Ravenel, very much interested," he repeated, with a smile.

XXIV

"I WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU"

AFTER a brief exchange of incivilities with Dermott, Frank went to his own room with a flushed cheek, a kindling eye, and something like a song of victory singing low and strong in his heart. It was a strange mood to follow such an interview, for there was scarcely a sentence of his during the talk with Katrine of which he was not ashamed. The lack of taste, of delicacy, the rawness of his conduct came back to him, producing a singular sense of elation; for by them he realized that his love was a thing stronger than himself; a thing which carried him along with it; buffeted him, did with him as it would, while considered conduct and the well-turned phrase stood pushed aside to watch the torrent as it passed.

There had been times when he feared that his ancestry of inherited self-indulgence had left him without the ability to desire anything con-

tinuously or over-masteringly, feared that he was over-raced, with no grasp nor feeling for the jugular vein of events. These had been unworded doubts of his concerning himself in the three years past. But after the talk with Katrine he knew himself capable of great love, of love which was stronger than himself, and the new manhood in him gloried in the surrender.

He dressed early, hoping to have a word with Katrine before the other guests came down, but she was the last to enter the drawing-room before dinner was announced. Standing by the doorway, he saw her coming along the wide hall alone. She wore black, unqualified black, low and sleeveless. Her hair, which seemed blacker than the gown, was worn high, not in the loose curls he knew so well, but in some statelier manner, with an old jewelled comb placed like a coronet, and she held herself more aloof from him than ever before, her eyes avoiding his glance and her cheeks exquisitely flushed.

But at sight of Dermott her bearing changed, and Frank saw with jealousy that she went quickly toward the Irishman, holding out both hands and saying, "Dermott," in a voice which seemed to have a sob in it as well as a claim for protection.

During dinner Ireland was easily triumphant, for while Katrine sat at Nicholas van Rensselaer's right, Dermott had been placed on her other side, and Frank, sitting by deaf old Mrs. van Rensselaer, had abundant time to mark McDermott's gift for society. "One might think him the host," Ravenel thought, critically, noting that the laugh, the jokes, the gallantries were ever in the Irishman's vicinity, and the head of the table was easily where the McDermott sat.

When the ladies were leaving, Dermott took the situation in both hands, as it were, by rising with them and turning a laughing face to the men, who were calling his name.

"I'm going to join the ladies now, if they will have me!" he cried. "I have less of their society than I like, belonging, as I do, to the working-classes. And besides," he waved a hand, white and beautifully slender, toward them, "I know you all, unfortunately well, as it is!"

A chorus of friendly insults were thrown after him, but he dropped the curtain with no further word, and an hour later Frank encountered him walking slowly up and down the terrace in the moonlight with Katrine.

They were talking earnestly, McDermott urging something which Francis was glad to see

Katrine was far from yielding. Twice he saw her shake her head with great firmness, and once, as they came near him, he heard her say, "I *will* not, Dermott," and, knowing the girl as he did, Frank felt that, whatever the matter, it was settled with finality.

Try as he surely did, he found it impossible to have a word alone with her that evening, and the next morning he learned from the servants that her luggage was to be taken to the station the following day at an early hour.

She was not at luncheon, and Frank was meditating on the possibility of leaving with her on the early train, when a note was brought to him by her maid.

Would you care to walk with me *now?* [it read] I should like to tell you something before I leave.

KATRINE DULANY.

This was surely the unexpected, and he waited for her on the portico with the feeling that there was some mistake, and that the maid might reappear any minute to ask the missive back again.

But Katrine herself came around the corner from the greenhouses and called to him from below. She wore a black walking-skirt, a black leather jacket, and a three-cornered black hat,

and Frank involuntarily compared this very aristocratic-looking young person with the little girl in the short-waisted frocks he had known, so many years ago, it seemed, in North Carolina.

In silence they went down the driveway to the beach road, along the path to the cliffs. There was a chill in the sea-wind, for the afternoon sun gave only a rose-red glow, but little warmth, as they stood looking at the crumpled reflections in the water. "It is almost sunset," Frank began, abruptly, drawing nearer to her. "It might almost be a North Carolina sunset, mightn't it? I don't know, Katrine, what you want of me, but I want, for the sake of that summer full of sunsets which we knew together, that you should let me tell my story and judge me—finest woman—that—ever—lived—judge me after the telling as it may seem just for you to do!"

There was a piteous quiver of her lips as her eyes looked bravely into his as she nodded an acquiescence.

"When I left you, Katrine, like the coward I was, that dreadful morning, so long ago, I wandered around like an Ishmaelite, more wretched than I believed it possible for a human creature to be, longing for you, always, day and

night, waking with a convulsion of pain in the gray of the morning, but still obstinately determined to marry none but some one whom my forebears would have considered 'suitable.'" He smiled at the word.

"When the news came of your father's death I was in the Canadian woods. I started home immediately; I had no fixed plan, except to see you, to help you in some way. In New York I had a telegram saying that my mother was very ill at Bar Harbor. There was nothing to do but to go to her, of course. It was before this that she had sent me Nick van Rensselaer's letter, and the idea came to me from that, that *I* might be the one to do something to make your life a bit happier. You may think it was reparation for the suffering I had caused you, but it was not. I *couldn't* let you go out of my life. In this way, I reasoned, I could keep in touch with you for years. When I stipulated that you were to write once a fortnight, I had no idea the letters would be anything but simple statements of your daily life. You see, I forgot," he smiled again, the charming, whimsical smile that seemed so much a part of him, "that you were Irish and could do nothing impersonally.

"Immediately after mother's illness came the

matter of the railroad, and"—he hesitated—"Dermott McDermott. You see, Katrine, you had stirred something in my nature I never knew before—ambition! That was part, but the desolation that followed your out-going made action necessary. Well, the new railroad was to be constructed through the plantation, and I worked with all the energy I could to forget. You see what you did for me, Katrine! And at every turn, circumventing, obstructing, legislating against me, urging me on by mental friction, was Dermott McDermott. Am I tiring you?" he asked, tenderly.

"No," she answered. "I am glad to know how it all was. Over there in Paris, when I was alone, I often wondered."

"The interest in my own railroad naturally led to interests in the two adjoining ones, and always, *always*, Katrine, there were those letters of yours urging me on by your divine belief in me. That you loved me, thought of me, wished me well, prayed for me,—a man has to be worse than I ever was to fail to be helped by that. And your loyalty, the very selflessness of your love, your willingness to be hurt if it would help me— Katrine," he interrupted himself, "there were other women in my life, but, one by one,

I measured them up to the standard of you, and they became nothing. I remember once, at the club, they brought me two letters, one from you and one from another woman. It was the one in which you wrote, '*I have not forgotten, I do not wish to forget. I want to make of myself so great a woman that some day he may say, with pride, "Once that woman loved me."*' I disliked to know that your white letter had even touched the other one, and that night the man I hope to make of myself was born. If there be any achievement in my life that is worth while, if I ever count for anything in the world's work, it is you who have done it, you and the letters which you blame me so much for permitting you to write."

She turned toward him, her face flushed and divinely illumined, anger forgotten. "You mean it?" she said.

"As God hears, it is the truth."

"Then," she paused, "I am happier than I thought it possible I should ever be in this life!"

"And you forgive me?"

"There is nothing to forgive."

"That gives me courage to go on," he said. "Do you remember," he put his hand over hers as he spoke, and they both went back in

thought to the time he had laid his hand over hers on the fallen tree, the night of their first meeting, "do you remember, Katrine, that when an alliance is to be arranged for a great queen, it is she who must indicate her choice and her willingness. You have become that, Katrine, a great queen! I'm asking, with more humility in my heart than you can ever know, that you choose—me!"

As she looked at him, her eyes were incredulous. "Don't let us talk of such a thing," she said, abruptly, turning her small hand upward to meet his in a friendly clasp.

"But, Katrine, it is the only thing in the world I care to talk about. Oh," he said, "I know how hard it is for you, that you are going to make it hard for me, that you are not going to believe me, nor in me. But, whether you believe it or not, it is the white truth I tell you, that ever since the first night I saw you I loved you, and wanted you for my wife."

She sat on the brown rocks, her knees clasped in her slender arms, looking through the sea-mist at the sun going down behind the Magnolia Hills.

"Don't let us talk of it," she said, decisively; "the thing is utterly impossible. Tell me about

yourself instead: the new railroad; the work; and Dermott McDermott." He turned, looking up at her curiously before answering.

"The last four years of my life have contained something overmuch of Dermott McDermott—" And then, the animosity gone from him, "Katrine," he cried, "in Heaven's name, what did I ever do to him? He seems to spend his time trying to circumvent my plans. He hates me so that it seems"—he waited for an appropriate word—"funny," he ended, with a laugh. "I have sometimes thought he was in love with you. Is he in love with you, Katrine?"

"Tell me about the railroad," she said, taking no note whatever of his question. "I have heard many things of it."

"Well," he began, "there were many things to hear. One by one the men who had pledged themselves 'went back on me,' as the Street phrase is, which brought out all the obstinacy in me. I built it myself. It's a success, and it's lucky," he ended, "for if it weren't I don't know where I should have ended in a money way. I was desolate and, as you told me cheerfully in one of the letters to the Great Unknown, 'full of ignorances and narrow-mindedness.' There was never anything better came to me, save one,

than the work. I think it has made me better. I hope so."

"It's queer, queer, queer, this little world, isn't it?" she demanded, abruptly.

"It is, indeed."

"Here are we, together again, after many years, talking about ourselves, just as we did in those other days."

The old Katrine was beside him, with the pleading, explaining, dependent note in her voice, the same rapid, short sentences, the same shy look which was ever hers when doing a kindness. "I must tell you the reason I wrote the note. Last night I was very angry at you. I forgot Josef, who showed me that anger is for fools only. Then Dermott came, and while we were walking on the terrace I told him everything: that I owed you money; that I wanted it paid at once. He is Madame de Nemours' executor. She left me—not a great fortune, you know, but more than enough to repay your loan to me. So much is simple. But there is more." She hesitated before slipping her small, bare hand in his again. "Dermott thinks he knows something which will cause you much sorrow and trouble. He is not certain. He is waiting letters from France. And I wanted to tell you

that it will rest almost entirely with me to say what shall be done about this bad news which may arrive. And I want you, when trouble comes, to remember that once I said I would come from the end of the earth to serve you—Well," she said, the look of unreckoning, honest, *boyish* loyalty in her eyes, "I will keep my word. You must not worry; I will take care of you." It was like a mother's promise to protect a child, and, save for the sweet confidence in her own powers, Frank, not understanding, could have laughed aloud. "I want you to think of this to-night, when Dermott talks to you—will you?—and to remember that the matter is far from proven. Madame de Nemours herself did not believe it."

"Katrine," he cried, impressed by her serious face and tone, "what is this mysterious trouble that is coming to me? Can't *you* tell me?"

"I have thought of that, but I believe that you would be happier in the future to know that we had never discussed it together. I know *I* should. It's all so foolish," she ended.

"You are really going to-morrow, Katrine?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"It is better."

"For you?"

"For both of us."

"Ah, Katrine, why? You are a great enough woman to forgive. Can't you do it? You have done so much already."

"I am afraid," she answered. "I suffered too much. It was too horrible. Only," and she touched his shoulder gently, "you are not to think that I don't care for you. It mayn't be in just the way that I used to do; but nobody else could ever be to me what you have been. I don't believe a woman, a real woman, ever loves twice in her life, do you?" She asked the question with the manner distinctively her own, of comradeship, of wanting to touch souls even on this question most vital to them both.

"I hope it's true of you, Katrine."

The gray sea broke in white lines on the shore beneath them; the gulls uttered shrill, clattering cries above their heads, before Katrine rose.

"We must be going—on!" she said, looking seaward, her hands clasped in front of her, her face saddened and white.

"But, Katrine," he cried, "look at me, Katrine! Nothing has been settled between us. I have asked you to marry me. You say you will not.

You tell me you still care some little for me. It's a foolish situation. I was a cad, an ignorant and colossally selfish cad, but I am humbled, and oh, I want you so!"

There was nothing but kindness and affection in her face as she stood with appealing eyes looking up at him.

"Do you want me to tell you what I believe to be the truth?"

"Yes; but, Katrine, don't make it hurt too much," he said.

"I think," she spoke the words softly, "if I had gone out of your life, had had no voice, had not succeeded, if the world had not spoken my name to you, you would have forgotten me in a year. I believe it is not Katrine Dulany, the daughter of your Irish overseer, whom you love, but La Dulany, who happens to have a gift, the adopted daughter of the Countess de Nemours, the woman whom you have heard the Duc de Launay wishes to marry!"

"Oh, Katrine!"

"I don't want to hurt you! indeed, *indeed* I don't," she repeated. "I wanted you to know exactly what I think. Ah," she cried, "be fair! Do you blame me?"

"No," he answered. "I blame you for noth-

ing; but it is not true! I love the soul of you, Katrine. And there has been between us love, love stronger than ourselves or our foolish prejudices. I believe that neither of us can forget, that something stronger than your will or mine draws us together. I will not accept your refusal. And you will not forget me! I mean to see to it that you shall not."

They returned to the house, through the incoming sea fog, in silence. At the foot of the side-stair they shook hands and said "good-bye" softly.

He had not expected to see her again in the evening. But here he failed to understand that the excitement under which she was laboring made either solitude or inaction unendurable. She was among the first to come down to dinner, and never, he reviewed the entire past before he came to the conclusion, had he seen her more beautiful. She wore pink, modish in the extreme, with many jewels—he recalled that he had never before seen her wear jewels—and she seemed in sky-scraping spirits, her eyes alight with fire and vivacity; and at the table he could hear the droll tones of her voice before the laughter came; and altogether she went far toward driving him daft by an apparent gayety at parting with him forever.

Immediately after the ladies left the table Dermott touched Frank lightly on the arm. "Could I have a few words with you in the gun-room?" he asked. "It's the place where we shall be the least likely to be interrupted."

Ravenel followed him, after a nod of acquiescence, and stood on one side of a great chimney, which was filled with glowing logs, waiting for the Irishman to speak. He was entirely unprepared, however, for the consideration, even the impersonal kindness in Dermott's voice as he said, "I'm afraid I'm letting you in for a pretty bad time, Ravenel."

Frank bowed. Even McDermott was forced to admire his serene manner.

"Miss Dulany told me last night of her obligation to you."

Frank waited with no change of expression for Dermott to proceed.

"She said she desired her money obligation to be paid immediately."

"It is an affair of small moment," Frank answered.

"You know, perhaps, that my cousin, Madame de Nemours, left her property to Miss Dulany?"

"I heard of it at the time," Frank returned.

"And named me as executor," Dermott explained.

"A fact which escaped me," Ravenel answered, suavely.

"It has taken some time to settle the estate," Dermott continued, "because of a certain claim which, if proven, makes the estate a very valuable one. This claim nearly concerns you."

"Go on," Frank said, briefly, discourteously as well.

"I do not know," Dermott continued, "whether you are aware or not that your father made an earlier marriage than the one with your mother."

An ominous chill passed over Frank, though he answered, bravely, "I was not."

"When he was living at Tours he married a girl, an Irish girl, who ran away from a convent to become his wife. She was but sixteen at the time. Her name was Patricia McDermott, my cousin, afterward the Countess de Nemours."

Frank continued to listen, but, although his eyes held keen apprehension and his face was white, he showed a fine courage.

"My uncle, her father, was an ardent Roman Catholic," Dermott explained, "a gloomy, overfed, and melancholy man who never forgave his daughter. In a short time your father seemed

to have"—Dermott coughed—"tired of the affair," he explained, lightly, "and, his studies being finished, he left his wife and child and returned to America. I do not desire to dwell on the misery of my cousin and her child. She was cared for by some poor folks; my uncle gave her a death-bed forgiveness; the child died, and in process of time she married the Count de Nemours. After the death of her second husband, she gave me full charge of her affairs, and among her papers I found documents relating to this early marriage. The year before your father's death I met him, quite by accident, in New York. The name was familiar to me. I asked questions, found he was married and had a son, yourself.

"Mr. Ravenel," Dermott changed his tone of recital to a more intimate one, "to speak truth, the matter is inexplicable to me. Your father was a brilliant man; a man of the world who, if he had no religious scruples on the subject of bigamy, must have had respect for law. Why," Dermott rose from the table by which he had been sitting, and stood directly facing Frank—"why he should have made a second marriage, with a wife and child living in France, is beyond explanation."

Frank drew back, his face colorless, his lips drawn, and, as the horrid import of the news became clear, "Ah, God!" he whispered; and then, with memory of his father uppermost, "It's a damned lie!" he cried.

"It may be," Dermott returned, calmly. "Most things are open to that interpretation. I'm afraid, however, you will have difficulty in proving it so. I have had the certificates of the marriage and of the birth of the child for a long time, but international law requires much. I have living witnesses. In Carolina, in looking up the matter," he spoke the word vaguely, "I failed to find anything which would disprove the points I have just placed before you. I was awaiting some letters from France before explaining the case to you, when Katrine demanded that her debt to you be paid immediately. There are many reasons why I do not wish to pay that debt now, reasons which we, as men, can understand. She might not comprehend them, and she certainly would not give the idea a straw's weight if she did, having once made up her mind. Now I'm going to tell her that I've paid her debt, Mr. Ravenel. It will comfort her. But with the matter which I have revealed to you still a little unsettled, and the

markets in the state they are in, I cannot do my duty as executor and fulfil her desires immediately. After all, it is a small amount, and if my personal check—" He waited, and Ravenel spoke.

"Mr. McDermott, Miss Dulany's indebtedness to me is too slight to consider. About this other terrible business, I shall search my father's papers! It is necessary that I do everything I can to protect my mother's name as well as my own."

"That's reason," Dermott agreed.

"As to Miss Dulany—"

Both men turned, for at the far end of the room Katrine stood, under the swinging light of a Japanese lamp, regarding them.

She came rapidly toward them, her head a little forward, her cheeks scarlet, and a gleam of temper in her eyes, which Frank had never seen, but with which Dermott was not unfamiliar, and took a place between them.

"See!" she cried, smiling, and there was never another woman in all the world who had the appealing smile of Katrine Dulany. "Don't let us make this all so dreadful. There is just some mistake," she said, with a gesture of impatience; and from here she went on with a certain terrify-

ing ability, peculiarly her own, to come directly to a point.

"Oh," she said, with a gesture including them both, "you've done what I asked you not to do, Dermott!" she said. "You've claimed a yet unproven thing. I'm tired of the whole of it. It is better that we three should understand one another altogether and not go talking by twos," and she faced Dermott as she turned. "You may prove everything, and I'll never believe a word of it! Give me Ravenel, and I'll return it to those to whom it belongs. It's his," indicating Frank, "and his mother's, and they shall keep it, no matter what you prove! As for me!" she laughed, giving herself a shake as a bird does. "Hark!" she cried, raising one finger. Softly, as a bird calls to the purpling east at dawn, she took a note, listening intently, going up, up, up, till the tone, a mere thread of gladness, reached high E, where it swelled, rounder and fuller, until it seemed to fill all space, descending in a sparkling shower of chromatics to lower G.

"Did you mark that?" she cried, in a defiant bit of appreciation of herself. "What do I need with money? I can go out on the streets and come back with hands full." And before they

could answer she had disappeared through one of the long windows of the piazza.

"And what do you think of that, now?" demanded Dermott of Frank, with a touch of the brogue, as they stood together in some bewilderment, looking after her.

XXV

KATRINE IN NEW YORK

THE following morning, in a drizzling rain and wind from the east, Dermott McDermott stood beside Katrine at the station, arranging for her comfort, directing her maid, and wiring Nora in New York, lest she should be unprepared for this hastily determined return to the city.

"I was sorry for Ravenel last night, Katrine," he said, with an earnest sympathy in his tone. "I think I have never known a man who drew me to him less; but that has nothing to do with the matter. I was sorry for him," he repeated. "Isn't it a dreadful performance, this tragedy of life?" he demanded, looking down at her intently, unmindful of noise of luggage or the shrill voices of the passers to and fro. "But the thing to do," he cried, straightening himself and raising his chest, "is to show a brave front always! Never let the world know you're downed in anything. So carry all off with a laugh and a song.

Plant flowers on the graves, flowers for the world to see, and for the great Power above as well, that He may know we are not whining — that we're down here doing the best we can."

They stood, hands clasped, on the platform as the train drew in, looking into each other's eyes, and Katrine's lips trembled as she spoke the word "good-bye."

"Sure it's not 'good-bye' at all," Dermott cried, changing his mood to cheer her — "not 'good-bye' at all! I'll be in town in a day or two bothering you with my visits and advice. And if anything definite turns up about the Ravenel matter I'll write you. Do you know, Katrine, I felt so sorry for him last night I'm almost hoping he can disprove everything."

And Katrine found, as the train pulled out, that there was another who had not been unmindful of her going, for Frank's man appeared from nowhere, touched his hat with accented deference, gave her a letter in silence, and disappeared into the blankness from which he came. But for the envelope she held, Katrine might have believed him a vision that had passed.

There was no formal beginning. The letter ran:

I shall not see you again until I know the truth. You will understand the reasons. I am going to Ravenel to-day to make some investigations. Of the outcome of these I cannot speak.

In all of this there is one thing sure. Everything may be changed in my life but my love for you.

F. R.

It was still early in October when Katrine returned to New York and to Nora, who was waiting for her in an old-fashioned apartment just off Washington Square. The Irishwoman had driven a thrifty bargain for the place, and in a well-contented spirit was setting up the household goods.

There was a great porch at the rear of the rooms, with locust-trees in the yard below, and Nora had already put flowers in pots about it, to make a "nearly garden," she explained. Here, for over a month, Katrine enjoyed the home-making; the arranging of her Paris belongings; the transformation of the shabby surroundings into a delightful spot of restful color and peace.

The day after her arrival from the Van Rensselaer's, Nora announced, with a twinkle in her eye, that there was a gentleman below whom she had told to come right up, and Barney O'Grady entered before his mother had ceased speaking.

Katrine greeted him with affectionate remembrance, smiling as she did so at the change in this boy whom she had helped to New York. He was flashily dressed, after the style of a college freshman, and conversed, as she discovered, in a language known only to the New York newspaper man, who, as some one told her later, has a "slanguage" all his own.

No one could have been more helpful than he, in their present situation, however, and Katrine learned anew day by day the gratitude he cherished toward her for the help given so long before.

Slender and tall, with red face and high cheekbones, thin nose turned upward, showing the inside of the nostril, and the lines like a parenthesis mark on either side of the mouth, he scanned the world alertly with his pale-blue eyes, scenting news like a human hunter-dog.

But he had many of the faults of his race, for with fine insight and ability to forecast events, he fell short in the execution of his brave schemes; failed to keep the respect of others after he had won it; accepted insufficient proof on all subjects, relying dangerously on a much-vaunted intuition, a fault in him which changed Katrine's whole life. In a way, he had become a power in

the newspaper world, and had, as she discovered, a knowledge of the private affairs of prominent people which seemed supernatural; and it was a habit of his to look over the names in a newspaper, remarking cheerfully at intervals:

"There's another man that I could put in jail."

But there was an unworded matter which gave Katrine a kinder feeling toward Barney than either her love for Nora or any past acquaintance between them might have done, and this was his admiration for Frank Ravenel.

If Barney had any knowledge, directly, through Nora, or indirectly through his intuition, of the interwovenness of Katrine's life with Ravenel's, he had the taste and the ability to conceal it.

But his literary temperament got the better of him where Katrine was concerned, and before a week was past he set up a hopeless passion for her, as she laughingly put it.

"He'd die for you, Miss Katrine," Nora explained one evening.

"Sure I don't doubt it for a minute, if there were enough people by to see him do it," Katrine answered, with Irish comprehension.

With this over-informed person, her little French maid, whom Barney called "Her Irre-

sponsible Frenchiness," and Nora, Katrine spent a busy month trying to forget her meeting with Frank entirely. In the daytime she could do this, but at night she wondered much concerning him —if he were back at Ravenel; if Dermott had proceeded in the bitter business concerning the early marriage, with many plans for readjustments in case he had done so.

Through Barney, who still clung to many of his North Carolina associates, Katrine had news of Frank's return to Ravenel immediately after the Van Rensselaer visit, and of a sudden journey to France following close upon the heels of his return.

Early in November—it was the afternoon of the first snowfall — delayed letters came from Josef containing the St. Petersburg contracts for her signature. She was to have her première in May, and Josef wrote that he would go up from Paris with her.

This arrangement was widely published at the time in London and Paris, so that the claim afterward made that Katrine's Metropolitan engagement was cancelled because of her divine forgetfulness the night she was to sing for Melba can be proven utterly untrue.

In the mail containing the contracts came other

letters, the most important being one from Dermott, stating as an incident that her debt to Frank had been cancelled, and as a matter of pronounced importance that he was wearing a new green tie. He ended by saying that he would give an account of his stewardship on January 1st, and that he hoped he had done his duty to her and his dearly remembered cousin. He wrote no word of Ravenel, neither of developments nor compromises, and Katrine concluded not unnaturally that the matter had been allowed to rest.

But she reckoned without two important persons in this conclusion. The first was McDermott, who, as he put it, "wasn't going to betray a trust because a girl flouted him a bit"; and the second, Ravenel himself, who was showing a fine honor and great courage in the quiet, unflagging search he was making for the truth.

She saw McDermott but twice during this time, though he sent almost daily messages or tokens of his remembrance. During his first visit he mentioned, casually, however, the disturbed condition of Wall Street, and that he was watching the money situation day and night with little time for visiting.

His second coming was a fortnight later. In

the afternoon Katrine had been reading by the fire an old Italian tale of love and death. It seemed hardly an epoch-making experience in her life, and yet there had come to her, like the letting in of sudden light, the knowledge that love was beyond and above reason, as religion is, as life itself, of which love is the cause. She had worked to forget, had been taught how to forget, yet she knew she had not forgotten, and that her listlessness since her visit to Mrs. Van Rensselaer had been chiefly worry lest trouble should come to Frank.

At five Nora brought in the tea-things, and Katrine closed the book over which she had been dreaming.

"Nora," she began, for the Irishwoman was like a mother to her, "did you ever forget your first love?"

"I did worse than that, I married him. Barney's the result," was the answer.

"But you never could have married any one else but Dennis, could you?" Katrine persisted.

"Niver!" the little old woman returned, with ready decision. "He bate me, Miss Katrine, and misprized me, and came and wint as he listed, and finally left me altogether; but I could never have chose another. It's the way with Irish-

women, that! The drame of it niver comes but the wance—niver but the wance," she repeated, looking into the fire, but seeing the old sea-wall at Killybegs, with flowers on top of it, against a cloudy sky, and a sailor boy with bold black eyes calling to her from the boats.

And Katrine, her tea forgotten, repeated, "It's that way with Irishwomen — the dream never comes but once."

At sunset the bitter wind which had been blowing all day long turned into a gale, a rascal wind, which slapped a handful of sleet and ice, hard as glass, on one side of your face, and scurried round the corner to come back and strike harder from an entirely different direction.

The storm must have suited his mood in some way, for Dermott McDermott chose to walk through it, arriving at Katrine's door breathless and flushed, the fur of his coat gleaming with ice and snow. Here he found a glowing fire, with the old mahogany settle on one side and the green grandmother's chair on the other; the dull glow of old tapestry; flowers; the odor of mignonette; and Katrine herself, in a scarlet gown, delighted as a child at his coming. Perhaps it was the clatter and roaring and discomfort without which accentuated the peace and happiness

within, and led him, more than he knew, to that precipitancy of conduct which ended disastrously for him. As he sat in the great green chair Katrine looked up at him from the settle, and something in the intensity of his gaze made her make a quick gesture of warning to him before he spoke.

"Will you marry me, Katrine?"

She looked again quickly, to see if he could be jesting. In North Carolina it was his custom to ask her every day; but his sudden pallor and the choked voice told how terribly he was in earnest.

She answered, with a note of despair in her voice, "I wish with all my heart I could, Dermott."

"And why not?" he asked.

"It wouldn't be fair to you. There is some one else," she explained, bravely, a great wave of coloring coming to her face at the confession.

"Whom ye will marry?" he asked.

She shook her head. "I think not. It seems as if I could almost say I hope not."

"Dear," Dermott said, "I've loved you—always—ever since I've known you. When you were just a wee bit girl in New York, six years ago, and ye stood off the mob of boys who were

baiting the old Jew—since then I've taken every thought for you I could. And I'm asking you to believe me when I tell you that I want your happiness more than my own. I've felt always that you'll never succeed as a public singer, and here of late, since I've known the St. Petersburg contracts were signed, I've suffered in my thoughts of you. We'll just leave another suitor out of the question. It's these public appearances of yours I dread at the present. If stage life could be as it seems from the right side of the footlights; if you knew nothing of the people or their lives, except as Valentine or Siegfried, it would be different. But the meanness of it; the little jealousies; the ignorant egotisms; I am afraid you can never do it, you will despise it so."

He waited a little as though recalling stage life, in which he had taken some active part, before he continued with a noble selfishness.

"And I dread this St. Petersburg experience! You, just a bit of a girl alone, with nobody but an old Irishwoman and that Josef, who has a rainbow in his soul but no common-sense in his head. So, whether you care or not, I want you to know, to remember, if trouble comes, that there's a man here in New York thinking always of you, *one who would give his life to save you from pain.*"

XXVI

DERMOTT McDERMOTT

"You who were ever alert to befriend a man,
You who were ever the first to defend a man,
You who had always the money to lend a man
Down on his luck and hard up for a V.
Sure you'll be playing a harp in beatitude
(And a quare sight you will be in that attitude)
Some day, where gratitude seems but a platitude,
You'll find your latitude."

ABOUT Christmas-time the Metropolitan managers offered Katrine an engagement for next season. In a lengthy interview with their extremely courteous representative she explained her inability to accept the very flattering terms by reason of the already signed St. Petersburg contracts. Although there seemed no definite outcome from the interview, the gentleman with whom it was held left her, as all did, charmed by her sincerity, her enthusiasm, and her great generosity.

The following week Melba was indisposed, and the much-impressed gentleman of the Metropolitan wrote to Katrine, asking if she would sing for them in the great prima-donna's place.

She accepted the offer with small hesitation, asking no one's advice about an unheralded début. She was too great an artist to desire anything but stern criticism, and if she could sing greatly, she reasoned, the public would be quick enough to discover it. The opera to be given was "Faust." Her costumes were quite ready by reason of her Paris début, and she went to the morning rehearsals with the same joy in her work that she had known when studying with Josef.

About four of the afternoon, before the final rehearsal, it began to snow persistently in small flakes which dropped evenly from a leaden sky. Standing by the window, twisting the curtain-string unconsciously, with her soul out in the storm, she became conscious of excited cries of "Extra!" in the street below, and as though in accompaniment to them there came an incessant ringing of the bell at the street door.

Nora being absent on some self-appointed business of her own, the maid who had brought in the tea, and one of the very damp papers which

the boys were still crying below, left the room with some abruptness to see what was demanded below and who was clamoring for admission.

Katrine, left alone, poured the tea herself, her eyes scanning the news indifferently until they rested on some heavy black lines heading the last column. Again and again she looked, hoping that the printing would stay still, would stop seeming to dance up and down between the floor and ceiling—stop long enough for her to get its dreadful import:

REPORTED ASSIGNMENT OF FRANCIS RAVENEL!

Combined Attack Made on M. S. and R. Railroad!

Mr. Ravenel Dangerously Ill at the Savoy!

Dangerously ill! Dangerously ill! Dangerously ill! The words began going over and over in her brain, seeming to strike from within on her temples in a kind of hammering that she felt would set her mad. She stood helpless, her career, her work, her ambition gone from her in a divine self-forgetting and desire to help, as his gayety, his charm, "his difference" from all others came back to her. She made new excuses for his conduct. She told herself, as a mother

might speak of a child, that he had been so spoiled. She remembered only the best of him —his kindness to her father, his generosity to herself.

She had long since realized the weight of Frank's words the morning of their parting.

"And remember, that if I did not do the best, I did not do the worst; that I am going away when I might stay," and she knew, looking back on her youth and trustfulness, how much truth there might have been in those words. She clasped her hands to her head trying to think. The throbbing in her head began to be followed by horrid sensations of things around going far away to an immeasurable distance, and returning again rapidly and horribly enlarged.

"Dangerously ill!" she repeated. "Dying, perhaps, alone in hotel rooms with none but paid attendance."

Her throat became choked at thought of it. "Father in heaven," she cried, her hands clasped together, "help me to help him! Don't let him suffer!" she pleaded. "I promised to help him always. Help me to keep my promise!"

Outside, the controversy between the maid at the door and some other was growing louder, and

a demanding, forceful, insolent voice was insisting upon seeing Katrine "immejit," as the frightened French girl came back to the room in a panic of fear.

"A gentleman to see you, mademoiselle."

"I can see no one," Katrine answered, briefly, her face averted.

"He says his business is most important."

"Who is it, Marcelle?" she asked.

"It is Nora's son, mademoiselle, and he has been drinking; but if I were you, I'd see him."

The significance of the girl's tone changed Katrine's former decision.

"Tell him to come in," she said.

Barney came as far as the doorway and stood leaning against the frame of it, his eyes hot and angry, waving a newspaper wildly over his head.

"Of all the damned dirty businesses," he cried, "this is the damnedest and dirtiest I ever got up against! 'Combined attack,'" he quoted, striking the printed words with his fist. "Do you know the name of that combination? Dermott McDermott, that's its name. There may be a few others mixed up in it—Marix, for instance—for looks only. But it's McDermott at the bottom; this same McDermott mother's always tellin' me to imitate. Damned rascal! He's hated Mr.

Ravenel and downed him because he thinks you love him. Hit him when he's down, too!"

He was too excited to sit down, but walked back and forth, talking loudly with excited gestures.

"Mr. Ravenel got back from Europe only three days ago, Tuesday, and in the evening he sent for me to come to the Savoy. Miss Katrine, I've never seen so dreadful a change in any one. He was like an old man. The look of death was on him, and he said he'd sent for me to cheer him up with my talk."

The boy was unable to continue for the sobs which shook him, and he covered his face with his hands for a space before he could proceed.

"He'd found bad news in Europe, he told me, and wanted me to cheer him up. I stayed the night with him, and in the morning when I called him he did not answer, but just lay still and white, looking at me, unable to speak. We got Dr. Johnston right away, and telegraphed Mr. Ravenel's mother, who arrived the next day. Yesterday morning that hound Marix, whose affairs are all mixed up with McDermott's, sent this note to me."

He extended a bit of yellow paper toward her, upon which was written:

"Sell Ravenel stocks within the next twenty-four hours, and hold for the bottom to drop out of them."

"But I'll get even with him, this Marix!" Barney shrieked, in his rage. "The only reason he gives me tips is because I know something disgraceful of him! I'll publish him from one end of the country to the other! I'll send him to the penitentiary! But I can't reach McDermott! Oh," he cried, with clinched fists, "if I only could!"

"I can," Katrine said, quietly; asking, after a minute's doubting, "You're sure it is Dermott McDermott who is at the foot of the trouble?"

"Who else has the money or the reasons to make such an attack?" he demanded of her as an answer. "And Marix as good as told me McDermott had some big deal on against the Ravenel interests last month."

She stood looking up at him, the folded yellow paper in her hand, driven by race instinct to fight in the open, to get into the enemy's country, especially if McDermott were the enemy.

With an angry light in her eyes she called for a storm-cloak and demanded a cab, setting Nora and her remonstrances aside with abrupt decision. Giving the cabman the address of Mc-

Dermott's down-town offices, she sat in the dark of the carriage with the paper Barney had given her clutched in her hand, with neither consideration of the coming interview nor formulated plans. In a vague way she knew that people stared after her, as she went through the corridor of the great building, the hood of her storm-cloak thrown back. Unminding, she rapped at McDermott's private door. She had no misgiving about his being there. She knew in some way, before she left her apartment, that he would be there when she arrived.

"Come in!" he called, curtly.

She entered to find him alone, standing by the window looking absent-mindedly over the snowy chimney-tops, as though projecting a holiday.

"By all the saints at once!" he cried, gayly, at sight of her. "Here have I been ruminating on the sins of the fathers; on the triumphant fifth act, with vice punished and virtue rewarded at the fall of the curtain, when you enter!" And here her silence and pallor and accusing eyes stopped his talking. "What is it, Katrine?" he demanded.

"Did you bring this trouble to Mr. Ravenel?" she asked, her eyes filled with a dangerous light which in a second was matched by the blaze in his.

"Do you mean that ye think it was I who struck a man in the back in the way this thing was done?" he cried, bringing his closed fist down on the newspaper, which lay on the desk before him, in a splendid kind of anger. "How little you know me, after all!" he said, reproach in his voice. "How little ye know me! I've had neither art or part in it, nor suspicion of it until to-day. You'll be wanting proof of it!" he went on, a bit of scorn in his voice. "If so, mayhap the common-sense of the situation will appeal to you, though I don't know." He was angry, and she felt the brunt of it in these words. "Look you!" he continued. "Why should I be ruining an estate that I'm trying to get possession of? It would be a fool's part to play."

"Forgive me, McDermott!" she cried. "Oh, forgive me! I want no further proof. Your face is enough for me. But I'm beside myself with grief.

"I suppose," he continued, "that you reasoned I was capable of this because of that affair about the land on the other side of the river?"

"I did think of it," Katrine admitted. "Forgive me for it, Dermott, but I did think of it!"

"Do you know for whom I bought that land,

Katrine Dulany? For your father—no less. It was got with the hope of helping him. It stands in his name in the State records to-day."

"Oh, Dermott!" she pleaded, the Irish form of speech coming back to her. "You'll just be forgiving me, won't you?" She put her hand on his sleeve and looked up at him with imploring eyes. "You must know how great and good I still believed you to be when I tell you that I came to you to ask you to help him. I've some money—the Countess, you know," she explained —"and I thought if you'd faith in my voice—and ye've said often that ye have—that if"—she broke into a storm of weeping—"if you'd just lend him the money that's needed I could sing the debt clear in the years to come."

Dermott looked down at the bowed head upon his old desk, his eyes moist, his lips twitching.

"Perhaps," he broke in, the angry light still in his eyes, "ye'll tell me who accuses me of this business?"

For answer she extended toward him the yellow paper which Barney had given her, signed with John Marix's initials.

"And so you believed Barney, although ye know his weakness for jumping at conclusions? Ye must have believed him, for my name's

not mentioned here," he said, looking at the paper.

"He told me Mr. Marix had intimated to him that you were behind the attack."

"Ah! and so it's Marix that's been misusing my name, is it?" he cried, his eyes narrowed. "I'll settle with him!" And then, "Ye love Ravenel, Katrine?"

"Yes," she answered: "there's just nothing else in life for me."

"And after all that's gone between him and me, you are asking *me to help him?*"

"Dermott," she said, gravely, sobbing between the words, "I came to you because I have always known the greatness, the selflessness of you, and I trust you."

They stood in silence, not looking at each other.

"I have no one else," she went on. "There is no one else in the world I trust as I do you."

He held himself more erect at the words, a great light in his face.

"You are the only one who has always, always been kind to me," she continued, "and I'd give all there is of me to come to you, heart whole, as your wife. But I can't do it, Dermott, I can't do it! I've tried; no one knows how I tried to forget this love in my heart. I studied to forget,

worked to forget, *willed* to forget, but"—and here she spoke the truth of life—"when great love has once been between a man and a woman, the man may forget, but the woman never. I've wealth and beauty, they say, and gift, and they're all just nothing to me except to help him. Before I'd been two days at the Van Rensselaer's it was just as it had been in Carolina. It was only fear that kept me from saying I'd marry him."

"He wants to marry you now? He has asked you?" Dermott spoke softly for her sake, keeping from his voice the scorn he felt for Ravenel.

"Yes," she returned. "And I know all you're thinking; but it makes no difference! When I think of him, ill, perhaps dying, his fortune gone, and nameless, maybe, as well, I'd give my soul to save him!" she cried, tear-eyed and pale, but glorious in self-abnegation.

She had risen and stood before him with eyes uplifted and unseeing. For a moment only she stood thus, before, the strain of the time proving too great for her to endure longer, she turned suddenly, and but for his supporting arm would have fallen. For a little while her dear, dark head lay against his breast, a moment never to be forgotten by him, though with stoical delicacy he refrained from thoughts which might have

offended her could she have known them. He had grown very white before she recovered herself, but the great light still shone in his eyes as he placed a hand tenderly on her shoulder.

"Go home, little girl," he said. "Go home and be at peace. I give my word to help him. I give my word that all, so far as I can make it, will be well with him."

"Ah," she cried, "you are so good, so good!"

He made no answer whatever, standing gray-faced by the window, looking into the storm without as she drew her cloak about her.

"Good-bye," she said.

"I'll take you to the carriage," he answered, quietly. "The storm is still violent, I see."

Coming back to the office, he locked the door, drew the curtains, and sat beside the dying fire alone. In the outer room he could hear the click of poker dice, could even distinguish the voices of the players, but they seemed far off. Life itself seemed slipping from him. Suddenly he threw himself face downward on the rug in front of the fire and lay shivering, catching his breath every little while in dry sobs, impossible for any one to endure for long. Every little while he clutched the edge of the rug in his sinewy hand, not knowing in his agony what he did. The dreams and

hopes of six years had been taken from him, and a great imagined future built on those dreams as well. The glory of his life had departed, and in his passionate misery there seemed nothing ahead for him but gray skies and barren land and bitter waters.

All night and far into the morning he lay. About five, the storm outside having died away, the gray light began showing faintly at the window edges, and with the coming of the dawn the soul of the man gripped him and demanded an accounting. "Was this the way he helped?" he asked himself, accusingly.

By chairs and desk, for his strength was spent, he reached a small cabinet, and, finding a certain powder, took one, and, after a little while, another. Then he felt his pulse, timing it by the watch as he did so. Satisfied, he crossed the room to a safe, and with uncertain hands placed package after package of papers on the desk in careful order. Last, from an inner compartment, he took one labelled "Ravenel," and stood looking at it with speculative eyes.

The case was so complete. Quantrelle and his brother, a curé of Dieppe, of known integrity, had sworn themselves as witnesses, through an open window, of Madame de Nemours' mar-

riage. But what of it? Katrine could never marry a man with a disputed name! Still looking at the bundle, he struck a match. It flared up, sputtered, and went out, as though giving him time for second thought. Resolutely he lighted another, set the flame to the papers for a second time, and in an instant whatever trouble they contained for Frank Ravenel was nothing but smoke in the chimney.

"God forgive me!" he cried, as he sat down to write the following letter:

DEAR RAVENEL,—You will remember, I said in my last interview that the matter upon which we spoke could not be fully proven until I received further letters from France. They have come, and I hasten to write you that the marriage we spoke of was not a legal one, the witness, Quantrelle Le Rouge, being a great liar. It is thoroughly proven. Pray give yourself no more anxiety on the subject, and forgive me for doing what my duty prompted me to do. The thing is completely by with as far as I am concerned, and I have burned all of the papers relative to the matter. With best wishes for your complete restoration to health, I remain, Sincerely yours,

DERMOTT MCDERMOTT.

He folded the letter and sealed it, a curious smile upon his lips as he did so. Afterward he

began looking over securities and making a list of them in steady, fine writing for the work in the day to come.

About eight he went to his hotel, bathed, dressed himself for the day, and neither of the facts that his heart was breaking, nor that he was about to shake the money market of New York, prevented him from regarding himself critically in the mirror to see if he showed suffering, nor from changing his neck-scarf to one of gallant red.

Underneath the bitterness of his heart lay a desire to square accounts with Marix. But it was part of his nature to excuse the weak, and on the way down to Wall Street the remembrance of the broker's timid-looking wife and the three little ones came to him. It was easy, after all, to forgive. Marix was too unintelligent to understand that it paid to be honest. "Perhaps," he reasoned, "God meant that even the fools and traitors should be helped, too."

Going into the stock-room, he looked over the quotations of the day before in an unimportant manner, waiting for Marix to come in.

"Hello! Hello!" he cried, at sight of him, with a genial laugh, putting a hand on each of the little broker's shoulders and looking down

at him with warning eyes. "I'm going on the floor myself to-day. It's been a long time since I've been there. Ravenel and I have come to an understanding," his long, sinewy hands gripped Marix for a minute so hard they made him wince, "and I'm going on to protect his interests."

The blue light of battle was in his eyes; his hat was far back on his head and his hands thrust deep in his pockets as he waited for the gong to call him to the fight. He saw that many were regarding him curiously, and his cheeks flushed with the Celtic instinct to do the thing well—dramatically well. He knew that, in the long night vigil, part of him had died forever, but with chin well up, like a knight of old, he went, at the sound of the great bell, to battle for the happiness of the woman he loved.

XXVII

SELF-SURRENDER

WHEN Katrine returned to her apartment after her visit to Dermott, she found Nora, with an excited countenance, waiting for her at the door. Finger on lip, she indicated a wish for Katrine to follow to her bedroom.

"Miss Katrine," she said, closing the door by backing against it, "there's one waiting for you. And you must think quick whether ye want to see her—with all that it may mean to you—with the rehearsal to-night. Though, poor lady, God knows her troubles! It's Mrs. Ravenel," she concluded.

"Alone?" Katrine asked.

"Yes, and with the tears streaming from her eyes and the look of death on her face. Mr. Frank's dyin', they say. But I want you to think—to think for yourself, Miss Katrine. Remember the night in Paris, when the world hung on your voice! Think of the afternoon when the

greatest queen on earth kissed ye, after ye'd sung to her, with dukes and other creatures standin' round admirin'! Think that, if your voice fails ye to-night because of excitement and worry, it may be a check on your whole career! Think of the beautiful clothes laid out for ye to wear, and judge if it's worth while taking chances for a man who flung ye away like a worn-out glove!"

"Oh, Nora!" cried Katrine, reproachfully, "how can any one think of a voice in a time like this?"

As Katrine entered, Mrs. Ravenel turned from the fire by which she was standing and came toward her with outstretched hands.

Her eyes were red with weeping, and there was a hurried, despairing note in her voice as she spoke. "Katrine Dulany," she said, "I've come to you for help." Years of thought could not have given her better words, and the strong, young hands enfolded the cold ones of the suffering mother.

"If there is anything I can do for you, I will do it, oh, so gladly!" Katrine answered.

"Frank is very"—Mrs. Ravenel hesitated, as though lacking courage to speak her fears—"perhaps dangerously ill. For nearly two months the trouble has been coming on—ever since he

was at the Van Rensselaers'. When he came back to me in North Carolina he had changed. He seemed struggling to throw off some heavy burden. His old gayety was gone, and he was always going to Marlton to look for records or asking me for more of his father's papers. At times he seemed half distracted, and would sit looking at me with brooding eyes with pity in them. But when he came back from Europe, just two weeks ago to-day" — the poor lady's voice was choked with sobs, and Katrine put a supporting arm around her with beautiful tenderness as she waited for her to continue—"he looked so ill I cried out at first sight of him. And he does not care to live! I can't make it out. It's not the money trouble. Money could never worry Frank. He cares too little for it! Last week," she went on, her voice losing itself in sobs, "Anne Lennox wrote me of your being at the Van Rensselaers', and of its being said there that Frank had asked you to marry him and that you had refused. Then I remembered that he told me, three years ago, of loving some one very greatly. Last night he became delirious, and in the fever he called your name over and over again, crying always, 'Oh, Katrine, forgive!' And that's what I've come to ask you to do—

to forgive—to forgive him and me for all the wrong I taught him, for the weak and foolish way I brought him up—to forgive and come to him."

"There is nothing not forgiven," Katrine said. "I would give my life to save him," and the two clung to each other, weeping, before setting out, wifehood and motherhood, to battle with death.

Well hidden by the curtains, Nora watched Katrine enter the carriage after Mrs. Ravenel, realizing, with more anger than she had ever felt, all that the going meant. She had hoped that after a few years of the singing Katrine's heart would turn to Dermott, and as she saw her hopes fade away she shook her head knowingly, with even a touch of vindictive satisfaction.

"There are two kinds of men," she reflected, her eyes on the departing carriage: "the man who wants a woman to put her head on his shoulder, and the man who wants to put his head on a woman's shoulder. And when a girl's fool enough to like the last kind best, she generally pays."

XXVIII

UNDER THE SOUTHERN PINES ONCE MORE

WHEN Mrs. Ravenel and Katrine entered Frank's apartments they found Dr. Johnston by the window of the sitting-room, and, with no spoken word, Katrine knew he had been waiting for her to come. His face bespoke more than professional anxiety; it bore a look of sorrow and the dread of losing a dear friend.

According Katrine but a scant nod of recognition, he crossed to the door of the sleeping-room, and, after looking in, made a gesture, stealthy and cautious, for Katrine to enter.

The room was dark save for a night light. Frank's face was turned toward her, his eyes closed. One hand, helpless, unutterably appealing, lay outside the white cover, and at sight of him thus it seemed her heart would break.

With a swift movement she knelt beside the bed, waiting to take the poor, tired head upon her

breast. As her eyes grew accustomed to the light, she saw his lips tremble.

"Dear," she said.

There was silence, and then: "It is worth all—it is worth all—for this," he whispered. "Touch me, Katrine!"

And she laid her cheek on his.

"Katrine?"

"Yes, dear."

"You will stay? I will try to sleep now if you will touch me. Katrine, you will not slip away?"

"I shall stay until you are quite well, beloved."

At three in the morning he awoke with a shiver. "Where are you?" he called. "Where are you, Katrine?"

"Here," she answered, laying a hand on his cheek.

"Ah, thank God!"

It was over a month before Mrs. Ravenel and Katrine were able to take Frank south, where he longed to be. The St. Petersburg engagement was cancelled, and the Metropolitan manager, angry at Katrine's forgetfulness to notify him that she could not sing the night Mrs. Ravenel

had come for her, made many caustic newspaper criticisms. But both events seemed entirely unimportant to her, for Frank's paralysis, which the doctors had believed but a temporary affair, did not leave him as soon as had been hoped.

There was a splendid Celtic recklessness in the way she surrendered everything for him, a generosity which Mrs. Ravenel saw with commending eyes, believing it, by some strange mother-reasoning, to be but just. But Frank was far from taking the same attitude in the matter. Almost the first day he was able to be wheeled on the great piazza in the sunshine he spoke to Katrine of the time she must soon leave, to keep the St. Petersburg engagements.

"I have no St. Petersburg engagements," she explained, briefly. "I cancelled them."

He sat with closed eyes, but she saw the tears between the lids as he spoke. "I have not had the courage to tell you," he said, at length, slowly, "before, but all that McDermott said is true, Katrine."

"Indeed!" Words could not explain the tone. She might have received news of the Andaman Islanders as carelessly.

"You know what it means to me!" he said, after a silence.

"I know what you think it means to you," she answered.

"It means that I have and am nothing. When I think of mother—" He looked at Katrine, with her radiant beauty, as she reached upward for an early rose. "And your friend McDermott," he went on, "has done a strange thing. This morning I opened my mail for the first time since my illness. In it I found a letter from him, saying that it could be proven that my father had never made an early marriage, and that Quantrelle was a great liar. I don't understand it. I saw Quantrelle myself, as well as his brother, when I was in France. There is not a doubt the marriage was an entirely legal one, not the shadow of a doubt. Ah," he cried, "Katrine, it seems to kill me when I think of it!"

"Francis Ravenel," she cried, the old smile on her face as she came toward him and placed her hand caressingly on his cheek, "you told me once, not long ago, to ask you to marry me. I do."

"Do what?"

"Ask you to marry me."

"And I refuse," he said, firmly. "I will not be married through pity."

"Oh, very well." She seated herself on some

cushions on the top step, humming softly, as though his words were of no moment whatever.

"You don't think I mean it, do you?" he demanded, at length.

She made no answer whatever.

"Katrine," he said, at length.

"Yes."

"What are you thinking of?"

"I've gone away," she answered. "I was not being treated very well, and so I went away. I'm over in my Dreaming Land, My Own Country."

"Ah, come back to me!" he cried.

"Very well," she said, obligingly, though she made no movement toward him. "I've been rebuilding the old lodge, in my thoughts, for Josef. It will be such a wonderful place for him to rest in! He will want the first floor made into one room. And Nora and I will come there in the summer-time, when we're not singing. Perhaps you will come to visit us sometime, Mr. Ravenel!" she said, politely.

"Katrine, Katrine!" he pleaded. "It would be so unfair to you."

"Nonsense," she returned, shortly. There was surely never anything kinder or better in the world than this belittling of the whole matter.

"And I may never be strong again—"

"Then I can have my own way more," she laughed.

"And your voice—"

"Beloved," she said, gravely, "I can never give up my singing. Don't think me vain when I say I sing too well to make it *right* for me to give it up. I don't believe that anybody who does a thing well, who has the real gift, *can* give it up. But that I shall never have to sing for *money* is a great happiness for me. I can sing for the poorer folk, for the ones who really feel. Ah," she cried, "I've plans of my own, Josef and I! And the study and the pain were to teach me how unimportant all things are in this world save only love."

"Katrine! Katrine!" he cried, "you must help me to be square to you!" He raised his hand, feeble from illness, in the manner of one who takes an oath. "I solemnly swear that I will never do you the *injustice*—"

"Don't!" she cried, springing quickly to her feet and catching the upraised hand quickly to her breast. "Don't!" Adding quickly, with a laugh, "It's dreadful to commit perjury!"

Their hands were still clasped as Mrs. Ravenel came out to join them. In the lavender gown,

with her fair face smiling, and carrying a work-bag of the interminable knitting in one hand, she did not look in the least the emissary of fate she really was.

"Mr. de Peyster has sent some letters, Frank. He writes me that none of them are of importance, but that you may care to look them over. And they made me think of a great envelope of papers which I had meant to send to you before you were taken ill. I found it just after you had been looking up all those family affairs, before you went abroad! I put them with my knitting, and naturally forgot. Your father gave it to me, oh, so many years ago! and I put it in the cedar chest." She gave the papers to Frank, talking in a gay, unimportant manner as she did so. "Isn't that curious on the outside?" she demanded. "'*To be opened in case my will is ever disputed.*' Now, who did your father think would ever dispute his will? I had been a faithful and," she laughed, "more or less obedient wife for many years. And you were too small to dispute anything except matters with your tutor. Don't look them over now, dearest, they may worry you!"

Frank took the envelope with an inexplicable feeling of hope. That his mother had forgotten

important papers did not surprise him in the least. She had once taken a mortgage held by his father and pasted it over a place in a chimney where it smoked. She said herself that her temperament was not one for affairs.

A quick exchange of glances passed between Frank and Katrine as he excused himself to go to his room for rest, and then, alone at twilight, he broke the seal upon the confession of that Francis who had preceded him. To his utter confounding, he discovered in the envelope a certificate of legal marriage between Francis Ravenel and Patricia McDermott, duly witnessed and sealed. Wrapped with several letters which had been exchanged between them was a detailed account of the unfortunate affair in his father's crooked writing, and inside of all a bill of divorce, which had been obtained in Illinois previous to the elder Ravenel's marriage with the beautiful Julie D'Hauteville, of New Orleans.

As Frank read the history of the boyish folly he felt that little excusing was needed for his dead father, for the early marriage seemed but an escapade of a spoiled and self-indulgent boy with a headstrong and sentimental girl, neither of whom had taken a thought for the future.

"My wife renounced her faith to marry me [his father wrote]. The first year of our marriage, which was a legal one only, was one of great unhappiness, for at heart Patricia remained a Catholic still. She was depressed, suspicious, afraid of the future. Recriminations and quarrels were constant between us. Finally, I went to America with no farewell to my wife, to acquaint my father with my foolish act, and to ask him to make some suitable provision for us. Immediately following my departure, I discovered, my wife re-entered the Catholic Church. Soon afterward I heard that her father had extended his forgiveness, and that she had been welcomed back by her kinfolk in Ireland. Hearing nothing from her whatever, with the procrastination which was ever one of my great faults, I put off doing anything about the annulment of the marriage until the father of Quantrelle le Rouge wrote me that he had heard of her death as well as that of the child. But before my marriage to Mademoiselle D'Hauteville, I took the precaution to obtain a divorce quietly in Illinois. Even if Patricia were living and should marry again, I knew she needed no protection to make the marriage a valid one, as her Church had never recognized that she was married to me, the ceremony having been performed by a Protestant."

Frank laid aside the papers, and, with his head thrown back and his eyes closed, sat in the gathering darkness thinking, with neither con-

tinuity nor result, of that strange life-current which, the family history claimed, connected him backward to the song-making minstrels of the time of Charlemagne; to the gallant lovers in the time of the Stuarts; to the self-indulgent and magnetic Ravenels of North Carolina.

What had they done? Dermott's question came back to him again and again, and through the depression into which this thinking was leading him he heard Katrine singing softly on the piazza underneath his window.

Like a child he rose and went to her. She was standing by one of the great white columns looking into the shadowy pine-trees as he came. He did not touch her. He had such fear of breaking utterly before her that he said, with forced quietude of voice:

"I've changed my mind about marrying you, Katrine." In spite of his effort to be calm, his voice broke into something like a sob as he spoke her name.

"Yes," she said, realizing what the import of the papers must have been.

After he had told Katrine the important fact in his father's statement, there came to him with a sudden suspicion of the truth the remembrance of Dermott's letter, in which the Irishman had

stated that whatever documents he had held concerning the early marriage of the elder Ravenel had been burned.

Taking the letter from his pocket, he gave it to Katrine, who read it in the fading light and returned it wordlessly. She had turned her face away that Frank might not see the glow of admiration she felt for that Irish Dermott whom Frank could never understand.

"What do you think of the letter, Katrine?" Frank asked. "I fail utterly to understand it. Dermott knew, when he wrote it, that my father had made that early marriage. It had been proven beyond the shadow of a doubt even to me. I feel sure that he knew nothing of a divorce or he would have mentioned it."

"I think," Katrine said, softly, "that Dermott told a story. You remember"—her voice broke a little—"you discovered long ago he didn't always tell the truth."

"And you think, then," Frank insisted, "that when McDermott wrote this letter," he made a motion with it as he spoke, "he still believed that my father and mother were never legally married?"

"He believed just that," Katrine answered. "He told me so the day he wrote the letter."

"But why did he write me what he believed to be an untruth? Why did he burn papers which he must have believed to be valuable evidence?"

"It's a way of his," Katrine answered, vaguely.

"Katrine," Frank cried, "there is more to this! Why did McDermott do this thing for me?"

"He told me he would help you."

"When?"

"The day I went down to Wall Street to ask him to stop the attack on your firm, when you were so ill. It was the day I told him that I loved you."

"And loving you himself, as he has always done, he did this for me?"

She made a sign of acquiescence.

"Ah!" he cried, the glow of enthusiasm in his eyes. "I have never understood the man, but, before God, I honor and reverence him for what he did. There is much of the hero in this strange Dermott McDermott."

"I have known that always," Katrine answered.

"And still you prefer to marry me?"

She was standing at a little distance from him, and as their eyes met she nodded her curly head quickly, as a child might have done.

"Ah," he cried, opening his arms to her, "come to me, come to me, you divine little soul! I'm not worthy, but God knows how I will try to be!"

And a little later: "It is cold for you here," he said. "Shall we go in, Mrs. Francis Ravenel?"

THE END

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